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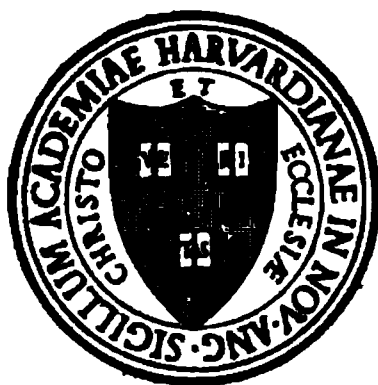
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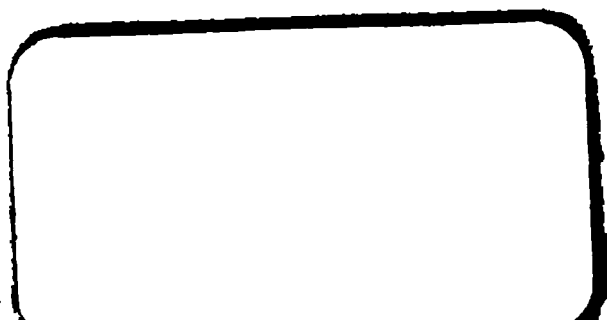


GIFT OF

FRANK EUGENE CHASE

(Class of 1876)

OF BOSTON



PARLOR VARIETIES

A COLLECTION OF SHORT
COMEDIES AND SKETCHES
FOR SCHOOL OR PARLOR

By EMMA E. BREWSTER, LIZZIE B. SCRIBNER, AND
CLARA J. DENTON

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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PARLOR VARIETIES.

MY SISTER'S HUSBAND.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN TWO ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

AUNT MARY.

LORETTA COLSON.

BERTHA COLSON.

PROF. THEOPHILUS THEOREM.

JIMMY COLSON.

JOHN, a *Servant*.

SCENE I. — *Living-room at the Colsons'. Table, with chairs for Aunt Mary and Loretta, at left. Chair and stool, or ottoman, front of stage. Enter Loretta at right, with large book, studying aloud.*

“MAMMALS, as regards brain, are divided into four classes : namely, Ly-cen-cephala, or loose-brained ; Lisen-cephala, or smooth-brained ; Gy-ren-cephala, or wound-brained ; A-chen-cephala, or ruling brain.” Oh ! I think I must belong to the wound-brained class. My poor head is all one tangle. But Theophilus—dear Theophilus !—he indeed possesses an Achencephala, a ruling brain. Oh ! if I were but learned enough to be worthy of becoming his wife ! *His wife !* Ah, me ! How dare I think of it ? Bertha, that Lycencephala, that loose-brained Bertha, possesses more attractions for him than I, with all my studious habits. But I am wasting precious time. “The orders of the Lycencephala are, —first : Mon-o-tre-ma-ta ; example, Or-ni-

tho-rhyn-chus, or Duck-billed Pla-ty-pus. Second: Mar-su-pi-a-la-ta; examples, Opossum and Kangaroo."

[*Enter Aunt Mary with knitting.*] What are you reading, Loretta?

Loretta [*going close to her and shouting*]. I am studying, Aunt Mary.

A. M. Yes. Well, what have you learned?

L. That a cow is an Ungulata, having a Gyren-cephala, or wound-brain.

A. M. Gracious! Our cow! Well, have you found out what will cure her? [*L. shakes her head.*] Has your father tried a red herring? Salt codfish is good. Castor oil, though, will cure almost anything. Now my pa had a red cow he bought of old Zenas Ford. I think it was the cow that he bought of Zenie Ford. I don't know, though, as 't was that cow. Seems to me that it was the black one he bought of Uncle Phin. Baxter; traded a barrel of high-top cider for her. I remember the cider, for ma wanted to boil it down to make molasses, and when that cow died, after all they did for her, I remember just what ma said.

L. [*looking up from book*]. So the cow died?

A. M. What did you say?

L. [*shouts*]. Did the cow die?

A. M. Of course she did. Pa had got ma's whole bottle of castor oil down her, too. And ma said he had better *cast her oil* upon the waters, for then he might have found it after many days; and now he had lost a bottle of castor oil and the cow, and a barrel of his best high-top cider into the bargain. I remember the cider, too, so that must have been the cow.

L. [*pushing away the book*]. Aunt Mary, were you ever in love?

A. M. Where?

L. In love, Aunt Mary, in love. With a man whose affections were already engaged upon a far more unworthy object than yourself?

A. M. Yes, yes, I understand about the *shelf*. But what did you say before that?

L. [*groans*]. Oh! if he should marry my sister Bertha, I should die. I know I should. Ah, my poor, poor heart! could it ever endure such pain? To "suffer still and still live on"!

A. M. What is the matter with you, Loretta? Where do you ache? What! you are not crying about that cow? Why, it won't break your pa if she does die.

L. It is a mistake, Aunt Mary. You don't understand. Nothing ails the cow. But to see a great and noble soul—one of the kings of the earth—throw itself away upon an unappreciative mind! A mind which looks upon it as a child upon a golden guinea, pleased with its glitter, unaware of its intrinsic worth.

A. M. I can't understand a word you are saying.

L. [*screaming close to her ear*]. Do you think Prof. Theorem is in love with Bertha?

A. M. No: Bertha isn't a toad, is she, nor a lizard, nor a bat? If she was he might be in love with her. But as she is only a pretty girl with pink cheeks, I don't suppose he can be.

L. I don't think Bertha is particularly pretty.

A. M. What did you say?

L. Don't you think learning is more attractive to the truly wise than mere personal beauty?

A. M. Oh, yes. Putty'll do; but if you want it to last long, use white of egg and quicklime. That sets right off and will make anything stick.

[*Enter Jimmy laughing.*] Crackee! I wonder if that's what Bertha uses?

L. [*sternly*]. What do you mean, Jimmy!

J. [*holding his sides*]. No disrespect to the old fellow, but—O geewhitaker! Te, he, he! 'T would make you laugh if you was as mad as a hornpout.

L. Jimmy, I am ashamed of you! Stop using such vulgar expressions, and tell me what you are laughing about.

J. Oh! if you could only have seen it! The Professor had undertaken to convoy me out on a natural-history excursion, with his pockets full of bottles to preserve spiders and snails in. Well, we hadn't got fairly started, and he was just beginning a learned lecture on toadstools, when he caught sight of Bertha coming down the garden, with a basket to pick peas, and the way he put up the lane was a caution! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho! Just imagine the figure he cut! The bottles in his coat-pockets banging his legs at every jump, swinging a gingerbread toadstool and his specs in one hand, and holding on to his scratch with the other.

L. Scratch! He does not wear a scratch! 'Tis his own beautiful, nut-brown hair.

J. Whew! If that is what you call nut-brown, I am glad Jennie Martin's hair is red. I used to think I'd like a maid with nut-brown hair. It sounds nice in stories, does n't it? much better than it looks in real life.

L. Tastes differ.

A. M. What are you talking about?

L. [*indignantly*]. Jimmy says that Theoph—eh! oh! Prof. Theorem *wears a scratch*.

A. M. How did he get it? Is it very bad? I never heard of a man making so much fuss over a scratch! If he'd rub it with vinegar he'd be all over it in a minute. Such a fool as that Professor is!

J. Go on, Aunt Mary! Suits my opinion to a T. Wish you could make father see it. Then he'd send the old fellow off, perhaps, and I should not have to take any more private lessons.

L. Indeed! How would you ever get to college, then? Prof. Theorem knows more than you and Aunt Mary both together, and more than you ever will know.

J. What! both rolled together and boiled down? Did you hear that, Aunt Mary?

A. M. No. What was it?

J. Loretta says that Professor knows more than you and I put together.

A. M. What is it Loretta wants to put together? Won't egg and quicklime do it?

J. No, indeed! Egg and quicklime aren't a circumstance to it. She requires the attraction of cohesion, I guess.

A. M. Now, Jimmy Colson, you are trying to make fun of me. Your sister don't want to fasten a cart-wheel on. I know better than that.

J. 'Sh! Here they come! Clear the track, for the bullgine's coming. Now you'll see the persimmons. Oh! [*pressing his hands on his sides*]. Kill me quick, or let me die easy.

[*Enter Bertha with coquettish hat and gay dress, grasses in her hand. Professor in old coat, with pockets full of bottles and tin cases.*]

Bertha. Oh! you don't know what pretty names the Professor has been telling me for these grasses. Did you know that grasses had names? And there are so many kinds. I didn't ever know that there was but one kind of grass before.

Prof. That sentence is slightly ungrammatical, Miss Bertha. Suppose you try to shape it better.

B. Why! I don't know, I'm sure, what I said. What was I talking about? Oh! this grass. Excuse me, Professor, I mean *these grasses*. This is— Now you listen, Loretta, and see what a good lesson I've learnt.

Prof. Learned, Miss Bertha. That word ends in *ed*.

B. Oh! does it? Yes. Well. See what the Professor has learned me.

Prof. *Taught* you, Miss Bertha. It is impossible for any one to *learn* you anything.

B. [*angrily*]. Well, really. You are very complimentary.

Prof. You don't understand; I wish to explain the difference between the verb "to teach" and the verb "to learn."

B. Well! Don't try this evening, please. You have learnt, learned, *taught* me so much that my head is like to split. Now you listen, Loretta and Jimmy. This is poa—poa—something that means to try to be more than you are.

Prof. *Poa pretensis* you are trying to think of, but *that* is not poa.

B. Well then, *this* is. Poa pretentious. And this is agrower.

Prof. No, Miss Bertha. *That* is not the poa. That is agrostis.

B. Yes, that's it. Agrostis. I knew it was something about growing. Agrostis trifolium.

Prof. Stop a moment, Miss Bertha. Trifolium? Think again.

B. [*pettishly throwing away grasses*]. Pshaw! I don't care anything about it, anyway. You bother me so I can't think of a thing. [*Exit pouting.*]

Prof. [*standing, looking after her*]. I fear that I have hurt her feelings.

J. You have. Broke 'em all to smash.

L. She is very quick-tempered. Childishly so.

Prof. I think I had better go and apologize to her.

L. Oh, no!

J. Oh, yes! Do now. Probably she's sulking off in her chamber.

L. No, she is not. Let her go, the silly goose! She is probably leaning on the gate, flirting with Ned Hastings. You need not imagine that any of your lessons stay in her mind two minutes.

Prof. [*sighs*]. Perhaps not. [*Sinks into chair front of stage.*]

L. [*seats herself at his feet, and takes MS. and pencil from pocket*]. Professor, I have been writing a little sketch. Would you be so kind as to listen and criticise while I read it?

Prof. I am willing to listen to the reading, but I have so little idea of literary merit or demerit that my criticisms will not be of much value.

L. O Professor! *All* your words have value to me.

J. [*aside*]. What! Another performance on the tight-rope! Why, this is as good as a circus.

L. [*reads*]. "It is June, leafy June of which the poet sings. The air is sweet with the melody of the *Macrulidæ* (or thrushes). The *Turdus migratorius*—commonly called robin redbreast—swinging aloft on the bending *Ulmus* (or elm) makes the atmosphere vocal with harmonious utterances. Below, the *Arum maculatum* (Indian turnip) lifts its stately head, while the lousewort (*Dasystema pedicularia*) and purple fox-glove (*Digitalis purpurea*) bow above the meadow brook. Enter with me yon shadowy woodland, where boughs of hazel (*Corylus Americana*), hornbeam (*Carpinus*), and ironwood (*Ostrya Virginica*) blend with the loftier and better known *Quercus castanea* (or yellow oak). Let us seat ourselves upon the soft grass." I did not know what grass was most common in woods, and so did not give the botanic name.

Prof. *Panicum clandestinum* is the most common woods grass about here.

L. [*writing with pencil*]. "Let us seat ourselves upon the soft *Panicum clandestinum* that covers the yielding sod, and look upon the beauties of nature."

J. You ought to introduce a *calix musca* or two in there. "Lulled by the sweet singing of the *calix musca*," etc., etc.

L. [*writing*]. Is that appropriate, Professor? Is *calix musca* appropriate to introduce there?

Prof. Oh, yes. very.

L. [*reads*]. "Lulled by the soft cadences of the *calix musca* singing in the boughs of the gloomy *Pinus*

strobilus, I let my thoughts wander through the past.' Is that right, Professor?

Prof. Yes, very good. That was a good thought of yours, James.

J. Thank you, sir. And, sis, you ought to gather some fragrant *Symplocarpus foetidus*.

L. [*writes*]. Oh, yes. "I gather a spray of the fragrant *Symplocarpus foetidus*, and while inhaling its delicious odor"—what ought I to do then, Professor?

Prof. I don't know, exactly, what you ought to do.

J. I'll tell you; gaze on the fragile *Tipula*.

L. Oh, yes [*writes*]. "While inhaling the delicious odor of the *Symplocarpus foetidus*, I gaze on the fragile *Tipula* bending its slender stem above a tinkling brooklet."

[*Jimmy bursts into uproarious laughter.*] Good, good! Good e-nough!

A. M. What is the matter now?

J. [*screaming in her ear*]. Loretta is going to gaze on a daddy-long-legs waving on its slender stem above a brooklet.

L. A daddy-long-legs! What were the other things you made me put in? What were they, Professor? What is a calix musca?

Prof. [*hastily rising*]. I think James had best explain his own jokes. [*Exit.*]

L. [*rising*]. Jimmy, you have been poking fun at me, I know you have! And the Professor helped you. Oh, how cruel! Stop eating your handkerchief, and tell me at once, what is a calix musca?

J. A mosquito, Loretta, but they do sing. The Professor said it was appropriate, very.

L. The Professor! O perfidy! O cowardice! How could he have abetted your miserable jokes? Tell me what the *Symplocarpus foetidus* is; tell me at once.

J. Well, stand away so I can run. *Symplocarpus foetidus* is—skunk's cabbage. [*Runs off stage.*]

L. Oh, cruel, cruel man! Oh, miserable me! And he, Theophilus, sat by and saw me made sport of

A. M. Loretta Colson! what has happened now?

L. O Aunt Mary! You never knew the wretchedness of unrequited love, and the more bitter, burning agony of seeing yourself made sport of by the one you adore.

A. M. Oh, yes, I saw them both go through the door; but what sent them streaking off so I can't imagine. What have you been doing with the Professor, Loretta?

L. What I have been doing with the Professor I dare not think; but henceforth I know that I must tear his image from my fond bosom, trample it under foot, and forget that such a man ever existed save as my brother's private tutor. O my idol! Can I, can I prove thine own iconoclast?

A. M. What are you going on so about, Loretta? I should think you was crazy.

L. No, Aunt Mary, no. "I am not mad, but soon may be." For "to be wroth with one we love works like a madness on the brain." Listen to me—[*turns suddenly away*]. No.

"Wherefore should I show my pain,
Since the pain, like all things, goeth?
Why should I of grief complain,
Since the feeling no one knoweth?"

Hearts may break, yet give no sign;
Eyes may mourn, yet hide their sorrow
As the world went yesterday,
So will it go to-morrow."

Ah, me! So will it go to-morrow. [*Exit.*]

A. M. Well, if that girl has n't got the toothache, I don't know what 't is ails her, unless 't is pains in the liver. She holds on to her side so that I 'm afraid she 's got liver complaint. I 'll go and ask her father what he thinks about her. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. — *Five years after. House of Prof. Theorem. On a table front of stage is a heaped-up work-basket, on the top of which, under a cloth, is a large snake. On the table, bottles of pickled reptiles, stuffed animals, sewing materials, etc. Thermometer on wall, just above pretended register. Enter Loretta, wrapped in shawl.*

L. Ugh! how cold it is! The Professor keeps his house regulated by a thermometer, and it is as cold as a barn; colder than my father's barn ever was. How Bertha can live so, I don't see. My! the register closed such a morning as this! I 'll open it and see if I can get a little warmth into my poor feet and hands. Not a drop of warm water goes into the bedrooms, and I have to wash in cold water this freezing weather, and dress with my fingers so numb I can hardly feel a button; for the Professor thinks warm water unhealthy. Yes, and makes me sleep in woollen sheets, scratching

all the skin off my chin, because flannel is healthy. And poor Bertha has borne this martyrdom for five years! No wonder she looks like a shadow.

[*Enter Professor in gray wig and beard.*] Good morning, Loretta. How is the thermometer? Positively, the mercury is nearly three fourths of a degree above summer heat. I detected an unhealthy warmth in the atmosphere as soon as I entered the room. Loretta, is that register open?

L. Yes, sir. I just opened it a moment, my feet are so cold. It is very unhealthy to keep one's feet cold.

Prof. [*closes register*]. You know I never permit the temperature of my house to rise above summer heat. If your feet are cold, take a brisk walk in this bracing air. There is a snapping white frost on the ground that will make your toes tingle. Will you go out with me?

L. No, not this morning, thank you. I have some sewing to do for the children.

Prof. You two women sit everlastingly over your needles, tucking, ruffling, scalloping, and making my children look like guys, instead of leaving them as their Creator made them.

L. Why, Professor! You would not have them left so this weather, would you? You yourself do not go as your Creator made you, but as your tailor dressed you, which is much more respectable.

Prof. Oh! you can twist my words as you choose, but you know that Bertha spends an unconscionable amount of time over her sewing-work.

L. Because you won't get her a machine.

Prof. A machine! A guillotine, why don't you

say? I can demonstrate to you by statistics, that twice as many women die daily in these United States at the present time as did a hundred years ago, before the introduction of sewing-machines.

L. And I can demonstrate to you, without the aid of any statistics, that *four times* as many men die daily on this continent, at the present time, as did in 1490, before Columbus discovered it. [*Exit Professor.*]

L. [*opening register*]. There! I'll get a little warmth into my bones while you are gone, you old dunderhead! How could I ever have admired him so? Why, I was really, frantically in love with him; so much in love that I took to my bed immediately after my sister's marriage, and never expected to get up again. It was with a trembling heart that I started to come to Bertha's after this lapse of five years; for although I believed that I had schooled myself to apparent indifference, I feared what might be the result of being so constantly with my hero. Heigho! the result is not alarming. There is nothing like living with a man in his own house to dispel any glamour which fancy may have shed around him. I would like to give this advice to every love-sick girl: go visit awhile at the house of your idol, and see him at home. If that does not cure you, your case must be beyond remedy, truly. It is fortunate for the men that they always go abroad to do their wooing. [*Advances to table and takes cloth off basket. Discovers snake. Shrieks and drops on floor.*]

[*Enter Bertha, dressed plainly, and the rouge washed off her cheeks.*]

B. What is the matter, Loretta? What has happened?

L. O Bertha! Look in your work-basket. That snake! Don't touch it! How do you suppose it got there?

B. Theo put it there, I suppose, to keep warm. Cover it up. He is very careful of such things. Such an amusing incident happened just before you came! Theo had been dredging a brook for lizards and things, and it being so late in the season, he took cold. He breathed so bad in the night that I was troubled, and got up to find some medicine for him. Putting on my slippers in the dark, ugh! you can't imagine what a cold, slimy, squirming mess I thrust my toes into. I could not help screaming, although it awoke Theo, and I was sorry. "My dear," said I, "there is something so horrid cold and wet in my slipper." "Oh!" said he; "'t is some newts I put in there to keep warm. I hope you have n't hurt them." Did you ever hear anything so ridiculous?

L. No, I don't think I ever did. But how can I get my work from under that dreadful snake?

B. Oh! you mustn't touch it till Theo comes. That's his step now. I know he's bringing some great curiosity, by the sound of his foot.

[Enter Professor, dragging an immense lizard, cut from cambric and stuffed. Large circles of white cloth sewed on for eyes, red flannel tongue. The more hideous and grotesque it can be made, the better. Loretta screams.]

Prof. See, my dear, what a rare specimen of amphibia I have just got, down to Keats's. He was opening a case of stuffed animals from Egypt, as good luck would have it, and I stepped in just in the nick

of time, as he was in the very act of lifting out this magnificent creature. I said, I must secure that before any one else sees it. He said it was worth one hundred dollars. I told him one hundred dollars was cheap for such an extraordinary specimen, and I bought it on the spot.

L. [*aside*]. A hundred dollars for that thing, and his wife without a decent dress to make calls in !

B. Yes, it is a wonderfully curious animal. 'Tis a animal, is n't it ?

Prof. This is *an* animal, my dear. How often do I have to tell you to use the indefinite article *an* before a noun beginning with a vowel !

B. Yes, *an* animal. What is it called, Theo ?

Prof. *Crocodilis Senegambisii minor*, or the lesser crocodile of Senegambia. It very much resembles the crocodile of the Nile.

[*Enter John with papers. Throws up hands and screams.*] Oh, my lud ! Oh, bless my stars, sir ! What's this ?

Prof. This is one of a very rare order of crocodile from Senegambia ; the only one in the United States. There is but one other stuffed specimen in the world ; that is in the museum of Napoleonic trophies in Paris.

John. Yes, sir. And I'm thinking, sir, that I would n't mind if this one was in Paris along with it.

Prof. What mail have you, John ?

John. Here, sir. [*As the lizard lies between them, John leans over, and reaches very far out, to hand the Professor the papers.*]

Prof. Did you look at the weather probabilities in the post-office ?

John. Yes, sir. I believe, sir, there was increasing cloudiness and storm areas in the northwest.

Prof. Southeast, you mean.

John. Yes, sir; you are right there, sir. With local showers in the eastern part of the State.

Prof. Southern portion, it should be.

John. Yes, sir. Right again, sir. Wind setting from the southeast.

Prof. From the northwest, you blockhead! And clearing weather expected.

John. Yes, sir. That is it exactly, sir. [*Aside.*] But if he knows so well himself, why does he always be bothering my brain with it?

Prof. You must learn to be more particular, John, in regard to the weather probabilities. They are of great importance to me in making out my thermometrical calculations.

John. Yes, sir.

B. [*aside to L.*]. Did you ever see such a brain?

John. Mrs. Theorem, mem, might I speak with you a moment, mem?

B. [*crossing over*]. What is it, John?

John. Mrs. Theorem, mem, I found a mud-turtle under my bed last week, and an adder in my best hat last Sunday. I could bear with things the like of these and not mention them; but what, mem, I can't put up with is master's using my bottle of whiskey to pickle his specimens in, so as that when I goes to take a drink, scorpions and caterpillars, and such like, come bumping up against my teeth, and sticking in my throat, that I'm like to be choked, as happened no longer ago than this morning with a horn-beetle as big as my

thumb, mem. That I can't bear with, and I feel that I must leave.

B. O John! What will your master say? You are the only man he ever had that he could get along with at all.

John. I'm very sorry for your sake and the children's, mem. But I feel that I can't hold out much longer if things go on in this way; and as I have a sort of grudge against the undertaker in this town, I have a special reason for not dying here. I won't give that undertaker a job if I can help.

B. I don't know what your master will do. He hates so to be troubled with teaching a new servant his ways.

John. Yes, mem. I don't wonder at that. But if you would be so kind as to speak with him, you might soften the matter a bit, perhaps. [*Exit.*]

B. Theo, my dear, John says that his father is dead, and he has got to go home and settle up affairs. Will you please pay his wages?

Prof. John going away! How long does he expect to stay?

B. I'm sure I can't tell. But you will know when he comes back, if he ever does. Things may turn out so that he can't be spared from home, you know.

Prof. Can't be spared from home? Humph! He can't be spared from here. I must go see about this. [*Starts toward door.*]

B. [*aside*]. Oh, what shall I do? [*Aloud.*] Theo, you have forgotten this lovely snake in my basket.

Prof. Sure enough, I had forgotten that. Bring it along, will you?

B. [*lifting basket with both hands*]. I want to see you skin it so much dear. [*Exit both, Professor dragging lizard.*]

L. Well, well! They say love is a great leveller. And a greater master, I should add. Think of our timid Bertha, who was afraid of a mouse, and could not kill a spider, carrying that dreadful snake in her work-basket, and talking so complacently about seeing it skinned! And what a fearful little hypocrite she has become! Evidently Bertha was *made* for Theophilus. I certainly was not. [*Exit.*]

CARBOLINE.

BY MRS. EBEN SCRIBNER.

CHARACTERS:

DOLORES MERRYMAN The Aunt.
JACOB MERRYMAN The Uncle.
HOPE MERRYMAN Niece.
LIEUT. HARRY GAY Lover to Hope.
DESIRE KNOWALL M. D.
ROSE The Maid (colored).

SCENE I. — *A common sitting-room. Hope alone, reading a letter; throws it on the floor, drops head on table, and bursts into tears. Enter Aunt; stops in alarm.*

Aunt. Why, Hope! what can have happened?
[*Hope sobbing all the time.*] What is it? Shall I call your uncle? Are you sick? Shall I send for the doctor?

Hope [*lifting her head*]. No, aunt: no one can help me now.

Aunt [*dropping into a chair*]. Mercy, child! you are a perfect fright!

Hope [*crying*]. There! I knew it. That is just it, and he will say so too.

Aunt. He will say so! So there is a he in the matter! It does seem to me that the gals of this day have

a heap of trouble with their beaus. Thank the stars, it wa'n't so when I was young. In those good old times, if a young man liked a gal, he went home with her. He went to see her. He did n't care who know'd it. And he married her. No flirting round corners never intending to say, "Will you take me, for better or worse?" There was no going home with this one to-night, squeezing the hand of that one to-morrow night, and so on to the end. If a man loved a gal, he meant marry: if he did n't, he left her alone. Now, I would like to know who this *he* is. [*Peering over her glasses.*]

Hope [*points to the letter*]. There is his letter.

Aunt [*picking it up*]. A letter! Well, well! A letter! It did not used to be so once. [*Reads.*] So the young officer is coming home! Bless my stars! Why, I remember now. You were to be married on his next leave. And so he is on his way! I must say you do not look much like a happy gal about to become a beloved wife.

Hope. That's [*sob*] just [*sob*] what [*sob*] I am not going to be.

Aunt. Mercy sakes, child! [*Looks at her from head to foot.*] You sha'n't have him if you don't want him. Perhaps there is another he.

Hope. But I do want him.

Aunt. Then what are you crying about?

Hope. I — I — I — he — he — he — you — you — you —

Aunt. I — he — you! They are all good pronouns, *Hope*. I never was much to larning, at the best, but I can keep that much straight. Let me get my knitting-

work, and see if I can keep the run of the rest. [*Begins to knit.*] Come, speak up.

Hope. Aunt, you know all that ever made Harry Gay care for me was my hair; and, now that I have frizzed and crimped it until it has all dropped out, he will not care for me one bit.

Aunt. Just as I said. Where is your pride, Hope? I would not marry a man that only cared for my looks.

Hope. But then, auntie, you do not know half how splendid he is, and all the girls dying of envy. Why, I was just so glad that my hair was nicer than Fannie's, for he liked her a great deal the best until he saw mine; and how I used to puff and curl it, so he would just have to admire it.

Aunt. Hope Merryman, I am ashamed of you. Where is that flour-bag of combings you saved? Why don't you give him that? It would save you lots of trouble, and him all the expense of housekeeping. [*Enter Uncle.*] Jacob, do you hear that? I say, Jacob, do you hear that? Here is this gal — our niece — your sister Polly's only darter — crying about a man who only thinks of her hair! — her hair! do you hear that, Jacob? — and actually acknowledges she tried to catch him. Can't you deceive him, Hope? Get a fine wig: your uncle will give you the money. Then you can have all the puffs and crimps you want.

Hope. I wrote him all about it in my last letter.

Aunt. That shows how little you know. It does seem to me the gals of this day lack common sense.

Uncle. Sho, sho! don't be so hard on the poor gal. She is better off now than her old uncle. Ha, ha, ha! Dolores, don't you think you would like me a leetle

better if I had a leetle less of a skating-rink here?
[*Rubs his bald head.*]

Aunt. No, Jacob, no!

Uncle. Weel, now, I don't know about that. Seems to me I'd kinder look oftener in the glass myself.

Aunt. If I don't think you two are born fools. What do I care if there isn't a tooth in my head? I guess I eat as good a meal as any of you, and never have the toothache. Would you like me any better, Jacob, if I had teeth?

Uncle. Ha, ha, ha! Well now, it does seem as if you would look a leetle better.

[*Enter maid.*]

Rose. Dar's a som'budy down dar as wants to come up. She — Lor' bress her! — ain't got no name; least-wise, she won't tell'd it. She said, kinder pertlike, how she'd be 'ticular 'bout seein' young Missy Hope —

Aunt. Does she appear to be a lady?

Rose. On dat yere matter dare might be many 'pinions. She do wear mighty big glasses. She circumlocates about wid a bag in her hand, and I 'spect for myself she am a life insurance agent, or a lightning-rod man. Homsoever, I calculate she am a 'spectable woman for all dat; but de hat am drea'ful small, and de ha'r uncommon big. [*Spreads hands each side of head.*]

Uncle. Yes, yes, gal! bring the woman up. [*Exit Rose.*]

Aunt. Perhaps I had better see her first alone.

Uncle. No, no, Dolores! let her come right in here.

Aunt. Then, Jacob, try to be a gentleman, and don't alarm the stranger by any of your odd ways.

Uncle. Ha, ha, ha! Well, now!

[*Enter Rose and Desire Knowall, M.D.*]

Rose [*pointing to her*]. Here she be. [*Pointing to others.*] There they is.

Aunt. How do you do?

Uncle. Morning, marm. [*Rising and bowing.*]
Rose, give the madam a cheer. [*Rose gives cheer, and remains.*]

Aunt [*to Rose*]. You can go now.

Rose [*aside*]. Not much do *Rose* go. Dis ye child just stays where she be, to see what's up.

Aunt [*to the Doctor*]. You wish to see my niece. This is Miss Merryman. [*To Rose.*] Go!

Rose [*turning away*]. Yes'm, don't ye see how I's goin'? [*Remains in room.*]

Dr. Good people, allow me to introduce myself, — *Dr. Desire Knowall*, — hoping that my name may suggest to you something of my true character, and give you faith in the wonderful compound I now offer, — an entirely new article, just introduced to the public, which will — [*Opens bag.*]

Hope. You need not take the trouble, my good woman. I have no interest in anything whatever.

Dr. But this simple liquid causes hair to grow — [*Hope screams, and catches at it.*] Why, what is the matter? I thought you took no interest in anything.

Hope. Neither do I. Take the old stuff away. I do not believe you can do a thing with it.

Dr. I am very sorry you are so incredulous, young lady. I came to your house expressly to give you back the fine head of hair I heard you had lately lost.

Hope. People must be much interested in my affairs

to mention them to a stranger. If it would do any good — No, no! I know you cannot help me. Do you suppose you can do anything for such a head as this? [*Takes off her cap, showing a bald head.*]

Dr. Of course I can. No case is so bad but that I can cause to grow a firm, handsome, luxuriant growth in ten minutes, on any place where hair has ever been before.

Rose [aside]. Golly, but I'll try it on de old scrubbing-brush!

Dr. It is warranted a sure thing — has never been known to fail. I can make grow, for a lady, crimps, curls, frizzes, puffs, rats, braids — whatever you choose; and for a gentleman, whiskers, mustaches, imperial, goatee — whatever his taste may dictate.

Hope [holding out her dress]. Give me every bottle you have, no matter at what price.

Uncle [slowly]. Now, jest you wait, young woman. There's more folks here than you. I want to know what the gal can do for me, — me, the old man, your Uncle Jacob.

Dr. Oh, sir! it will smooth out your wrinkles, take the stoop out of your shoulders, strengthen your spinal column, besides giving you a new head of hair; in fact, make you ten years younger.

Uncle. Do you hear that, old woman? Do you hear that? — ten years younger! Now, if you only had some teeth!

Aunt. Teeth, indeed! Why should I want to appear any younger than I am? As for you, you always did have an old look. For myself, I am contented just as I am.

Uncle. I say, you doctor woman, you might as well leave the hull lot here. But when you do so much for a man, don't you give a chromo, and throw a gold frame in? Ha, ha, ha!

Aunt [with dignity]. Jacob, Jacob! Don't mind him, madam.

Dr. I enjoy this enthusiasm. But one bottle apiece will be all you need.

Uncle [pulling out his purse]. What is to pay?

Dr. One dollar a bottle. Sold by all druggists throughout the country.

Uncle. The deuce! That all? Weel, give me a bottle. You don't begin to feel poorly, do ye, mother, for you see in jest about ten minutes I'll be altogether too young for you.

Aunt. You are a pack of fools!

Dr. And you, Miss — do you take a bottle?

Hope. In perfect faith, dear doctor; and I thank you sincerely for coming here.

Uncle. Now, if the old woman would take one! Say, Dolores! [*She draws herself up with dignity.*] Ha, ha, ha! Somehow, wife, you don't look the picture of content. Here's your two dollars, marm, and thank'e. Come, Hope, you'n' I'll try the consarn. [*Exeunt Uncle and Hope.*]

[*Dr. rises to go.*]

Aunt. Stop one moment, doctor. Let me see if Rose is listening. [*Looks out first one door, then the other, while speaking.*] I have many trials. There, now we are to ourselves. Do you really think that it might make teeth start anew?

Dr. The thought never came to me; but I should

like very much to see so interesting an experiment tried, and know the result.

Aunt. We should be happy to have you call again, and I will let you know how it acts. [*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter Rose singing some plantation song. Sings and sweeps, and arranges the room. Enter Lieut. Gay.*]

Lieut. G. Ah, Rose, good-morning! I am glad to find you alone, so that I can inquire for the family.

Rose. Oh, bress me, Marse Gay! ye a'most scar'd dis nigger white! Yah, yah, yah! 'Spects de don't know ye'er comin'. Misses in dar rooms. Shall I call Missy Hope?

Lieut. G. Yes — no. Stop a moment, Rose. How does your mistress look since — since — since —

Rose. Since when? dis mornin'? Oh, she be distractingly lubly.

Lieut. G. No, no! Be good, Rose. Here is a piece for you to buy a ribbon. [*Gives a coin.*] You know what I mean — since her hair came out. How does she look now?

Rose. Out of her eyes, sah, just as she did afor'. Yah, yah! Tank ye, Marse Gay, for dis yere dollah!

Lieut. G. Rose, how about her hair?

Rose. Good land, Marse, but ye ought to see it! Ye neber see'd sich a sight — neber!

Lieut. G. [*aside*]. Oh, I knew so! [*Aloud.*] Rose, how long is it?

Rose. Well, Marse Harry, I tink how it am jist a little mor'n dat. [*Measuring on her finger.*] It's such a sight! Yah, yah, yah! But it's a-growin'!

Lieut. G. Call her. I must see her, I suppose.
[*Exit Rose.*] To think that such a thing should have happened! Was ever fate so hard upon a man before? and that man an officer in the United States army! Here has come my wedding-day, and behold a bald-headed bride. Poor Hope! she had not a single attraction but her hair, and now that is gone. I had far better have taken Jennie, with her lovely eyes, or else Fannie, who had a fortune. I was sweet on that girl until I saw Hope with her beautiful hair. I could have had my pick of the girls for twenty miles around. If there was only some way to get out of this! If something could occur to break the engagement! If I had only received that last letter of hers before I had written of my leave of absence, she should never have known it. I could have run down to Chester, and passed a delightful two weeks flirting with the Clark girls, and no one need been the wiser. If I could only see some honorable way out of this! There it is — my honor! I suppose I think more of my honor than most men. Nothing else has brought me to her at this time; and I flatter myself, that, under the circumstances, few men would have come at all. But I never yet have had a dishonorable thought, much less performed a dishonorable deed. Here comes Hope now. I must meet her with open arms. She must never know my feelings.

[*Enter Rose.*]

Rose. Marse Harry, you'll hab to wait anudder while yet, I 'spec'. Missy Hope is dressing. Lor! such a transmorgration as is going on in dis yer 'fectionate family!

Lieut. G. What is transmor — How did you say it, Rose?

Rose. O Marse Gay! it's cause and effect — cause and effect! Glory! but it be monstrous astonishing, nebberless! [*Exit.*]

Lieut. G. Good fortune favors me for once. I will try an experiment. [*Takes a bottle from pocket.*] The woman at the depot said it would grow a fine beard in three minutes. A lady cannot take down her curl-papers in that time. Ah! I forget there is nothing on that head to curl! We will say button her boots, then: that will give plenty of time. I have no doubt but that the woman lied, and I do not know as there is any special need of my wishing to grow much heavier whiskers; but then I will try it. Is there no glass here? Oh, yes! [*turns to it, standing back to audience, rubs vigorously, talking the while,*] here is one. Not as good as I am used to, but will do very well. [*Turns back, caressing a long, heavy beard.*] I do not know, but [*turns and looks again in the glass*] I think [*to audience*] that it is rather becoming. I cannot tell which is the most astonishing, — that my whiskers should have grown so much, or that a woman should have told the exact truth. [*Looks again in the glass admiringly.*] But here comes Hope. No! not Hope. This lady is beautiful, and has long, flowing hair. It must be the Cousin Annie so often mentioned in Hope's letters. Why was I in such haste to engage myself? One would a thousand times make that head Mrs. Lieut. Gay's. I have half a mind to make love to her, anyway. I will pretend not to see her; then she will have to speak. [*Sits at table and opens a book.*]

[*Enter Hope, magnificent hair flowing over shoulders.*]

Hope [*aside*]. My goodness! this must be one of Harry's friends. How splendid he is! I wish that Harry had such whiskers. Perhaps he has come to tell me that a gun has exploded, or the cars run off the track, or some accident has killed poor Harry, and — then — he will fall in love with me, and, after a proper time, will offer himself. If he does I will have him, if it should be to-morrow. I will speak to him and hear the bad news. [*Aloud.*] Good-morning, sir!

Lieut. G. [*aside*]. Thunder and Mars! how much her voice sounds like Hope! [*Aloud.*] Is Miss Hope Merryman at home?

Hope [*aside*]. My! how much his voice is like Harry's! [*Aloud.*] I think she is: have you a message for her?

Lieut. G. Pardon a stranger's curiosity, but there is such a resemblance in your tones to those of my friend, Miss Merryman, that I judge there is some near relationship existing.

Hope. You are right: there is, quite near. And I beg the privilege of inquiring if you are a friend of Lieut. Gay?

Lieut. G. The very best friend he has. Allow me. [*Hands her his card.*]

Hope [*reads*]. "Lieut. Harry Gay." Beg pardon, young man: I know better than that. Do you suppose Lieut. Gay would not know me, Hope Merryman, but would stand there inquiring if I was a relation of hers?

Lieut. G. And, begging your pardon, miss, Hope

Merryman would have known Harry Gay much better than you do.

Hope. If you are pleased to doubt my very existence, here is the lieutenant's last letter, bearing date of Tuesday last.

Lieut. G. [aside]. That is my letter. How did the girl get it? *[Aloud.]* And here is Hope's last letter to the lieutenant. What do you say to that?

Hope [aside]. The young gentleman certainly has my letter. *[She bursts out laughing.]*

Lieut. G. What is it? Do tell me, oh, my dear young lady, what can have happened!

Hope. O Harry, Harry! I know what has changed us so. *[Points to the table where Harry's bottle stands.]* It is the effect of Carboline, — that wonderful Carboline!

Lieut. G. [embracing her]. My own beautiful Hope! Yes, I see. The same lovely girl you always were. How could I have been so blinded? I am more than delighted to see you. And you — you have counted every moment with anxiety since I wrote I was coming?

Hope. Indeed I have.

Lieut. G. While, as for me, I was never before so impatient to reach you. How lovely your hair is, Hope! It really seems as if it was more perfect than ever.

Hope. Tell me truly, Harry, when you received my letter, saying all my hair was gone, did not you wish you had never seen me, or else you were engaged to Fannie?

Lieut. G. Such a thought never entered my head.

Why, my beloved, I love you for your own sweet self alone. You believe me, don't you, darling?

Hope [aside]. Oh, what a lie! [*Aloud.*] Of course I do, dear. I am positive I know exactly how much you care for me. Come, let us find aunt.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II. — *A kitchen. Rose singing, and paring slices of pumpkin. A piece drops on the floor.*

Rose. Take keer dar, Rose! Old massa 'll be 'pear-ing 'bout des premises wid his "Take keer, Rose; be keerful." [*Bell rings.*] Ring away dar, old bell. 'Pears to me the hull house is upside down, 'tween Carbolinkum and Missy Hope getting mar'id. I's goin' to get some o' dat da stuff, and see how dis nigger's wool will look. 'Spects 't will look pretty fine. [*Bell rings.*] Tink dem folks must want somfin; must go for sartain. [*Exit; returns immediately with a bottle.*] Yah, yah! I's jest 'fiscated dis yere bottle in Missy Hope's room. What'll I do wid it fust? Oh, golly! dar's dat scrubbing-brush. Dat doctor dat brought dis yere said hair'd grow where it was 'fore. Missy Merryman's allers finding fault 'cause de brush wear out, and I ruined dis one trying speriments on the sidewalk. I'll fix it now, 'fore she nebber know'd it. [*Rubs it, pouring on contents of bottle.*] Bress my soul, I can feel de hair growin'. Dar's dat spider 'gin I lost dis mo'nnin'. I'll kill ye sure dis time. [*Stamps on the floor until she gets behind table;*

strikes a hard blow with brush.] Dar, you are done for now, sartain. [*Turns to audience with a new brush.*] Well, now, if dis yere don't beat all. I'll try dis new invention on my head too. [*Rubs some on her head. Without. "Rose! Rose!"*] Dat old woman, she am allers where one don't want her 'specially. I'll hide behind de table, whar she won't find dis child dis time. [*Hides. Enter Aunt.*]

Aunt. Rose! Rose! Why, where are you? This is the way our work is generally done. Kitchen empty and Rose not to be found. [*Picks up brush.*] I must say Rose is improving. I expected this brush to have been all worn out. It really does not look as if it had been used at all. Why, what has that girl here? A bottle of Carboline, as I live! Now is a good chance to try if it will make teeth form. Thank fortune, I have always had a good head of hair. [*Rubs awhile, then feels in her mouth.*] I really believe I feel them coming. [*Presses hand over face.*] Oh, how my face does ache! The old, old pain is there; yes, and the teeth too.

Rose [*rushes out from beneath table*]. O Missus, Missus Merryman! Oh, gorry! what'll I ever do? O Missus! oh! [*While behind table she has pulled wig out large.*]

Aunt. Rose, what is the matter?

Rose [*points at her head*]. 'Pears like you got no eyes. Oh! [*Groans.*]

[*Enter Uncle, with fine head of hair, Hope, and Lieut. Gay.*]

Uncle. Be keerful, Rose. What's the matter?

Hope. O Rose! what has happened?

Lieut. G. Seems to me there is a great noise here.

Aunt. Rose, you tell us immediately what all this is about!

Rose [*turning to Hope*]. You am knowing, Missy Hope, how de old missus dar is mighty 'ticular 'bout my combing dis yere head 'fore breakfast ebry blessed mornin'. Don't ye see I's gone and done it now? How's I gwine to clare out dis yere wool, nohow? Oh! [*Groans, rocks back and forth.*]

Hope. But how did this happen?

Rose. I's just helped myself to your Carbolinktum up dar, and—O Lor! what'll come ob dis darkey now is mor'n I ken tell.

Lieut. G. You might put on some more, Rose, and you'd soon make a fortune selling curled hair for mattresses.

Rose. You go 'long, Marse Gay. You don't know noffin' 'bout it.

Aunt. Perhaps Rose and Mr. Merryman had better enter into partnership. [*Laughs.*]

Rose. Golly to goodness! Missus has gone and done and got teeth! Oh, bress us an' save us!

Lieut. G. Mrs. Merryman, do open your mouth.

Hope. Aunt, have you stolen a Carboline bottle?

Uncle. Weel, I am beat now. That gal did always get the best of me. Ha, ha, ha!

[*Enter Dr. Knowall.*]

Dr. I could make no one hear, so followed the sounds. I would not have intruded, but I am really anxious to know the result of this morning's call.

Uncle. Perfectly satisfactory, my dear madam.

[*Rose looks in doctor's valise.*] Be keerful, Rose.
Ha, ha, ha!

Lieut. G. [*taking Hope's hand, leading forward.*]
You have united our hearts anew in the bonds of true love.

Aunt. I am the only one here that can talk sense. You have given me the toothache, you have made that old man think he is young and handsome, you have made two blessed fools greater fools than ever, and you have nearly frightened this poor black gal out of her senses.

Rose. But, bress de Lor', honey! you did inwigo-rate dis yere brush. [*Picks up scrubbing-brush.*]

Dr. You see what I have done; and now [*to audience*], friends, if there are any among you who would renew hair, both in length and thickness (and beautiful hair is a joy forever), you have only to ask the best-looking druggist in the city to procure you a bottle of Carboline.

CURTAIN.

THE FREE WARD.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR MILDMAI, *Examining Physician.*

MRS. SCHLAWALK VON DRUMBLE.

PATIENTS.

HANS PETER VON DRUMBLE.

MRS. BRIDGET O'HARRIGAN.

MR. GEORGE WASHINGTON, ETC. DOBBS.

JOHN FLAHERTY.

TOM.

HACKMAN.

SCENE. — *Hospital office. Bench or number of wooden chairs ranged along wall, facing audience. Desk with chair at end of stage opposite to and fronting door.*

[*Enter Mrs. O'Harrigan.*] Och! musha, musha! Where's the docthur noo? It's the tearin' hurry I'm in. Faix! and the rashcally docthur off beshportin' hisself on the Brighton road wid his foine team, I'll be bound! Och! wirra, worra! Noo, mind ye! This is the way the city fathers looks afther us poor craythurs, is it? Payin' the docthurs a big shalary to buy farrst horrses wid, and a lone widdy woman loike me a-waitin' at the horrspital all the day wid nobody to get shpache

wid but me own blissid self, barrin' a fly or two on the windy.

[*Enter Mrs. Von Drumble, hackman, and Tom, carrying Hans Peter wrapped in numerous blankets. Set H. P. on bench. Exit Tom and hackman. Mrs. V. D. wraps blankets around her husband.*]

Mrs. O'H. Arrah noo! What is it ye'll be wantin' the day? Niver a docthur will there be at the horrs-pitil the wake. Out wid ye, I say! This is n't the wake the docthur resaves patients, I tell ye.

Mrs. V. D. [*knitting placidly*]. I haf nottings to say mit de Irish.

Mrs. O'H. What'll ye be afther sayin', ye Dutch donkey?

Mrs. V. D. I haf nottings to say mit de Irish.

Mrs. O'H. What is that ye're shpakin' about the Irish? Ye sourkrout, nix cum rous Dutchman, ye!

Mrs. V. D. I haf nottings to say mit de Irish, I dells you. Unt Hans Peter, he haf nottings to say mit de Irish too.

H. P. Yaw. Mine vrow say so, unt I say so, too.

[*Enter Mr. Dobbs, very much drawn up with rheumatism.*]

Mr. Dobbs. Owch! Where's the doctor? [*Sits.*]

Mrs. O'H. If it's a docthur ye're wantin' ter say. it's the wrong horrspitil ye're come till intirely.

Mr. Dobbs. What do you mean? Owwww!

Mrs. O'H. The docthur'll not be here the wake.

Mr. Dobbs. Ooooh! Won't be here this week! What do you mean? Oh!!

Mrs. O'H. It's got anither call he has to a horrspitil out on the Brighton road, ye mind.

Mr. Dobbs. Owch! Is that so? Wal, I s'pose they'll send another one. Ohh! Good gracious, how it grips!

Mrs. O'H. No, it's not be afther sindin' another docthur they wull. So ye'd betther move yere shtumps. It's too poor the city fathers are — Hivin save 'em! — to pay no more nor one docthur's bills. Especially such of 'em as kapes a horrspital on the Brighton road, begorra!

Mr. Dobbs. Owch! Oh, thunder! What is this Dutch nigger a sputterin' about?

Mrs. V. D. *Ich been nicht* no nigger meself! I haf not shpattered. I haf not said von vord. *Unt* Hans Peter haf not shpattered, too.

H. P. *Yaw.* Mine *vrouw* say so, *unt* I say so, too.

[*Enter John Flaherty on crutches, one foot drawn up and wrapped.*]

John Flaherty. Och! it's kilt I am! it's kilt I am! it's kilt I am intirely! Oh, docthur, docthur, docthur dear!

Mr. Dobbs. There ain't no doctor here. Oh! Owww! Set down and wait for him.

J. F. [*groans*]. It's set down I can't widout shtandin' up, and it's shtand up I can't widout layin' down, and it's shtay layin' I can't at all at all, but shtandin' on me head. Oh, it's kilt I am, it's kilt I am! And what'll the childers do now, I dunno. [*Enter Dr. Mildmay.*] Och, docthur dear! docthur dear! It's dead I am the day. [*Mrs. O'H. rushes to the doctor, and follows him as he walks to the desk.*]

Mrs. O'H. Och, docthur darlint! May Hivin's blessin's light upon ye! It's the bluidy hurry I'm in,

and may ye niver know want nor poverty! And the saints defin'd ye, fur it's a foine countenance ye have, docthur, and it's the wonderful handsome man ye are intirely, barrin' that yere eyes are that overmuch brilliant as to be dazzlin'.

Dr. M. Sit down, will you, woman! Come here, my good fellow [*to J. F.*]. What is your name?

Mrs. O'H. May ye niver know the nade of a frind, docthur, honey! But it's the shwate smile ye have, and it's the murtherin' hurry I'm in!

Dr. M. Sit down, woman! What's your name?
[*to J. F.*]

J. F. Me name is John Flaherty, plaze yere Honor. But if it was Samuel J. Tilden, it's dead I'd be orl the same.

Dr. M. [*writes in note-book*]. John Flaherty. Where were you born?

J. F. Faix! What is it till ye, docthur, where I was born? Sure I *was* born, and that ye can say, or I would n't be hayre at all at all.

Dr. M. Rules of the institution. Where were you born?

J. F. That ain't me name, may it plaze ye! It's John Flaherty, and not Rools Thinstitooshun. May Rools Thinstitooshun niver suffer the pain I'm in the day!

Dr. M. Well, come, where were you born?

J. F. In Allyballycallycashaleen, may it plaze ye.

Dr. M. [*writing*]. That's a *tree*-mendous long name, is n't it?

J. F. It's not my fault that I worr n't borned in a place wid a shorrt name, docthur.

Dr. M. Very true. Where do you live now?

J. F. Well, it's the throoth I'll be tellin' yeze. Whin I furrst coomed till this country — and it's sorry am I I iver set eyes on it! — I shtarted to coom till Califerny.

Dr. M. Never mind that. Where do you live now?

J. F. Wull, it's lived most iverywhere I have, since I coomed till this murtherin' counthry, bedad! There's Wathertown wan, Malden two, Somerville thray —

Dr. M. Never mind that, John. Where are you now, — in the city?

J. F. That I am, as ye may say fur yerself.

Dr. M. You live in Boston, do you? In the city proper?

J. F. No, docthur dear. It's niver the inside of the city proper did I iver say, barrin' the wan time that mesilf and Peggy, me wife, had a bit shcrimmage, and I tapped her shlightly on the head wid the table leg. I took me rations in the *proper* for a few days thin, but it's not livin' there ye cud call it.

Dr. M. John Flaherty! It will be impossible for me to attend to your case, unless you tell me at once your street and number.

J. F. The shtrate and number is it ye 're wantin', docthur? Why did n't ye tell me that afore? It's not the loikes o' John Flaherty wad be withholdin' 'em from a ladylike gentleman loike yerself.

Dr. M. Very well, very well. Ann Street, is it?

J. F. Och! noo, docthur, it's a Yankee ye are fur a guess; 73 Ann Shtreet, that's where I reside, wid meself and the pig and the childers, and Peggy, me wife, whin she arrn't on the Island, as she is at thv orisint shpakin'.

Dr. M. What trade do you follow for a living?

J. F. Faix, docthur! the thrade I follow for me livin' has been the dyin' of me. If I hadn't worked fur me livin' it's livin' I'd be this day. But becuse I dyed fur me livin' it's dead I am intirely. It was tryin' fur to live that kilt me, sure, as indade ye may think since it's dye I do to live, and that's as thrue as if the praste had shpoke it. But it's dyed I have wanst too much, and come to me death by it, more betoken.

Dr. M. Ah! you are a dyer? [*Writes.*]

J. F. Thrue for ye, honey!

Dr. M. How were you hurt?

J. F. Was ye iver in a dye-house, docthur?

Dr. M. No.

J. F. Thin how can I tell ye how I got me hurrt?

Dr. M. Why, where were you hurt?

J. F. In the dye-house, sure.

Dr. M. Yes, but how?

J. F. [*coaxingly*]. Docthur, dear, are ye *sure* ye niver was in a dye-house?

Dr. M. Very sure.

J. F. [*despondingly*]. Wull, thin, I can't tell ye how I was hurrt.

Dr. M. You have got a bad foot, I see.

J. F. Thrue fur ye, bad enough! It's a moighty good hand ye are at a guess.

Dr. M. Well, what is the matter with your foot?

J. F. Wull now, docthur, honey, was ye *niver* in a dye-house?

Dr. M. No, no, John.

J. F. Wull, thin, how can I deshcribe till ye what is the matter wid me fut?

Dr. M. It got crushed in the machinery, I suppose.

J. F. Oh, it's ignerrant ye are as a new-bornn babby. Fhat machinery wud there be in a dye-house to crush the fut aven of a bedboog?

Dr. M. Oh, you've sprained it, have you, — put it out of joint?

J. F. It's wide enough ye are o' the marrk, docthur.

Dr. M. H'm! burned yourself?

J. F. Wull noo, it's burrnt I am in one sinse, and it's not I am in another. Docthur, was ye iver in a dye-house?

Dr. M. Supposing that I had been in a dye-house, what is the matter with your foot?

J. F. Supposin' ye had been intil a dye-house, I shteped intil wan o' the vats.

Dr. M. Oh, and scalded your foot, did you?

J. F. Och! it's the beauthefulist luck ye have wid guessin'. For it's shcalded me fut I did that the flesh orl biled off me bones as clane as ye cud pick 'em wid a knife and forrk, barrin' a mouthful or two on me big toe.

Dr. M. Heavens and earth, John! you don't mean to say it's as bad as that? [*Writes on slip of paper.*]

J. F. Wull noo, docthur, do ye min' the bit shtrip o' plank that rins along betune the vats, and they a singin' loike noightingales, and I a warrkin' along the plank just thinkin' of nothin' at orl, wid a shtick in me han' to shtir up the dye-shtuff and kape it from settlin' on the botthem, and ef it hadn't been fur that shtick hitten' the botthem before me fut did, it's not hayre I'd be to tell ye the tale.

Dr. M. [*ringing bell*]. Were you in long?

J. F. Bedad! it's the quickest move I iver made in my life, whin I went out o' the hot vat and intil the coold wan. [*Enter Tom.*]

Dr. M. [*handing Tom paper*]. Take this man to Dr. Carny.

Tom. Yes, sir. Come along. [*Exit Tom and J. F. groaning*].

Mrs. O'H. [*springing up*]. It's the beauthifulist patience ye've showed with that wearisome shpalpeen, docthur, jewel! and it's the hurry I'm in meself.

Dr. M. Why are you in such a hurry?

Mrs. O'H. Ye say I must go out on the two-o'clock train the night —

Dr. M. Well, you have four hours yet, then.

Mrs. O'H. Four hours! How does that happen, I'd like to know? Fhat time does the two-o'clock train be lavin', I dunno?

Dr. M. Just sixty minutes after one.

Mrs. O'H. Oh, that's the dirty thrick that was played on me. Do ye mind the little fellow in the bit room wid the windy in it down till the dapot?

Dr. M. The ticket-master? Yes.

Mrs. O'H. Sure, and he telded me that the thrain lift at two o'clock prezactly.

Dr. M. Oh, well, there don't half of those fellows know anything about the trains; they get in by favoritism. I suppose that fellow was put in by the Republican party: one of Grant's poor relations, like as not.

Mrs. O'H. Oh, it's the dhreadful corrupshun there is in this coonthry!

Dr. M. Yes, we need a Democratic President to straighten matters.

Mrs. O'H. Thru fur ye! that's what we do! And it's Teddy McGoolough himself will be dapot-master thin, why not; and thin, if I marry Teddy, it's meself will be ridin' orl day on the carrs wid me big shawls and foine dhresses, along wid the other grandees' ladies Arrah!

[*Dr. M. beckons to Mr. Dobbs, who approaches with many groans and contortions.*]

Dr. M. What is your name?

Mr. Dobbs. George Washington—oh! Thomas Jefferson—owwch! Andrew Jackson Martin—o-o-o-oh! Van Buren Zach—ah! ary—oh! Taylor—o-o-o-oh! Napoleon Bonaparte Dobbs.

Dr. M. Where born?

Mr. Dobbs. O-o oh! Well, I was born at—ach! Grandpap's. Ma'm went up hum for the—o-o-oh! nussin'. Oh, gracious!

Dr. M. H'm! Well, what was the name of your native town?

Mr. Dobbs. Wall, my native town is, I suppose,—oh! Greenfield—owwch! but I war n't born there, I was born up to—oh! tare and blazes! grandpap's.

Dr. M. Your parents resided in Greenfield?

Mr. Dobbs. Yes, most o' the time. They moved up there when I was—oh, *gracious!* 'bout ten or a dozen years old. Thunderation!

Dr. M. [sternly]. How long did your mother stay at your grandfather's after you were born?

Mr. Dobbs. Well, I dunno exactly—ow! never heard just the—ach! length o' time.

Dr. M. How long do you suppose?

Mr. Dobbs. Wall, I dunno—ugh! guess she got about as soon as—ow! other wimmin.

Dr. M. And she went back home as soon as she got about, eh?

Mr. Dobbs. Exactly, doctor. E-e-e-e-eh! went back to Harneytown.

Dr. M. Where you stayed till you were ten or a dozen years old?

Mr. Dobbs. That's it, doctor, it's wonderful—Ah! how you do get at things.

Dr. M. Well, if I can't get at them one way, I must another, you know. Was it Harneytown, Massachusetts?

Mr. Dobbs. No, I swon; I didn't know there was a Harneytown in Massachusetts!

Dr. M. Ah! what State did you come from, then?

Mr. Dobbs. Wall, I come from Illinoy here, but I had been out to Arkansaw. Oh! oh! bl-a-zes!

Dr. M. [*sternly*]. Do you know what State you were born in?

Mr. Dobbs [*very solemnly*]. A state of sin and disobedience.

Dr. M. [*impatiently*]. Where did your grandfather live—in what State?

Mr. Dobbs. In Hampshire, just across the line—E-e-e-eh! oh!

Dr. M. Across the line from where?

Mr. Dobbs. Old Vermont --o-e-eh! oh! Doctor, how much longer you goin' to keep this up? Why, you'll kill me.

Dr. M. Your native place, then, is Harneytown, Vermont?

Mr. Dobbs. Cats and dogs! didn't I tell you so an hour ago?

Dr. M. Mr. Dobbs, I hope you will have patience. The questions I am obliged to put to each applicant are very few —

Mr. Dobbs. Few? thunderation! You've been at me stiddy for more'n an hour, now. What else do you want to know?

Dr. M. Only just what your business is, and where you live.

Mr. Dobbs. Why, I've been out o' work for the last six months, and I on'y jobbed round afore that; and I don't live nowhere now, for my wife's broke up housekeepin' and gone back to grandpap's, and sent me — ow! down to the hospital to board — e-e-e-eh!

Dr. M. You've got the rheumatism pretty badly, I should judge.

Mr. Dobbs. Wall, you're a pretty good judge, whatever sort of a doctor you may be — oh! oh! oh! If I don't get out of this pretty quick, I shall have to be carried out. I'm drawin' up! I'm drawin' up! O-o-o-o-oh!

[*Dr. M. rings bell and hands slip of paper to Tom, who appears.*]

Dr. M. Take this patient to Dr. Carny.

Tom. Yes, sir. Come this way, sir. [*Exit Tom and Mr. Dobbs.*]

Mrs. O'H. [*springing up*]. Will ye be afther tindin' till me now, docthur?

Dr. M. No, no, you are not suffering so much as some of these.

Mrs. O'H. It's sufferin' in me mind I am, docthur, darlint, and that is the hardest kind o' sufferin' to bear ye mind.

Dr. M. Yes, hard to bear, but not very vital. It is your turn now, sir [*beckoning to H. P.*]. Come here.

H. P. *Ich* cannot moof, *Mine Hare* doctor.*

Mrs. V. D. *Eer konnicht* moof. *Eer* ish so worse as mooch pad.

[*Dr. M.* goes to *H. P.* and stands beside him to take notes.]

Dr. M. to *Mrs. V. D.* Are you this man's wife?

Mrs. V. D. Of coorse. *Ich* been his vrow. *Vas* for did you *nicht dink* I *vas* heze vrow? I vill not be so inshult by any man. *Ich* been von honest vomans.

H. P. *Yaw, Mine Hare.* *Deeser* ish mine vrow. *Ve* *vas* marrit *deeser* fife mont's. She ish *der* larsht vrow I haf mit me. I haf hat tree vrow, unt I *dinks* I shall not haf no more if you cure me not, doctor. It ish ferry pad to be so sick.

Dr. M. What is your name?

H. P. Mine name ish *Hans Peter Von Droomble*, unt *miner* vrow's name ish *Schlawvalk Von Droomble* Unt *miner* vater's name *vas* —

Dr. M. Never mind your father's name. Were you born in Germany?

H. P. *Yaw.* *Ich* *vas* pored in *Zharmany*, unt *der* name of mine *vurst vrow* . . .

Dr. M. Never mind your first wife.

H. P. *Yaw.* *Ich* neffer does mind *miner* *vurst vrow*. *Ich* does neffer mind *alles von miner vrows* [or, all of mine vrows].

Dr. M. Where do you live now?

* The German words are not correctly spelled, but written as pronounced in English, for the better guidance in speaking.

H. P. *Ich* lif at vun hundert unt *swinzig* Shambers Shtreet, in *der* pig house.

Dr. M. And what do you do for a living?

H. P. I shmokes *mit* myself unt do nottings, but *miner vrow* Schlawvalk vashes herself. *Ich* been dirty, unt Schlawvalk ish dirty-two.

Dr. M. Well, what is the matter with you?

H. P. I haf hat dree *vrow*. *Miner* larsht *vrow* ven she die she vas a ferry heffy loss — she veigh two hundert pounds.

Dr. M. Well, well, what ails you.

H. P. I vill dell you, mine goot frent. I haf ha' dree vife. Larsht May mine vife zhoomps up det. She vas *ine* goot *vrow*. I neffer find *nix* vun to fill her place. She veigh two hundert pound.

Dr. M. But what has made you sick?

H. P. Doctor, I dells you. I haf hat dree vife. My larsht *vrow* she vake oop det vun fine *morgen* larsht May. She vas so besser as goot. I shall neffer haf her ekvals. She veigh two hundert pound.

Dr. M. But where do you suffer?

Mrs. V. D. Doctor, I dells you. He ish ferry pad in heze legs; he ish ferry pad in heze back; he ish ferry pad in heze head; he ish ferry pad in vun foot, unt he ish so vorser as pad in *der* toder; he ish ferry pad in heze shtomach, he eat ferry leedle sausage, only dwelf or fifteen; he trink ferry leedle lager, no more nor fife quart vun day; he schmoke all day, he schmoke all night. He ish ferry pad, indeed.

H. P. *Yaw, Mine Hare.* Mine *vrow* say so, too.

Dr. M. We shall have to make an examination of this case. If you will wait until I have disposed of

this other case, I will take you into the examining room.

Mrs. V. D. Yaw. Hans Peter, he vill wait.

H. P. Yaw. Miner vrow say so.

Dr. M. [to Mrs. O'H.]. Well, my good woman, what do you want now?

Mrs. O'H. Sure, docthur jewel, I have a daughter-in-lorr what marrit me own son, Patherick O'Harrigan — rist his sowl — as dacint a lad as ye'd find in a yare's thravil, and if ye'd iver seen him in his foine blue coat, wid brash buttons, ye'd thought he worr a jintleman.

Dr. M. Well, which one is the trouble about, your daughter-in-law or your son?

Mrs. O'H. Me Patherick is safe enough out o' orl thrubble now, — Hivin rist him! — but there's a fishtful o' thrubbles orl along wid me daughter-in-lorr. The throllop that she is! And the washtefullist woman that iver throd shoe-leather, — a-flinging out wid the wan hand farshter nor Patherick cud fetch in wid the two.

Dr. M. What is your daughter's name?

Mrs. O'H. Ellen Calligan, from County Roscommon, Parish o' Arran. And if ye iver seen a dacint gurrel come outen Parish o' Arran, that wan warr n't Ellen Calligan.

Dr. M. Her name was Ellen Calligan before she was married, but what is it now?

Mrs. O'H. It's joost Ellen Calligan; that, and no more. Och, it's not dishgrasin' the daciut name o' O'Harrigan I'd be wid shtickin' it ontill a thavin' shlut like Ellen.

Dr. M. Does your daughter-in-law live with you?

Mrs. O'H. In coorse she do. Wad I be afther supportin' mesilf, whin I've got a daughter-in-lorr to the fore, what gits up foine linen at a dollar and fifty cints the doozen, and has a house of her own that me son Patherick bought wid his own airnens, — Hivin save him! — with a beauthifful pigshty fornenst, and the hins and the goat comin' in at the door quite friendly loike?

Dr. M. Where is your daughter-in-law's home? •

Mrs. O'H. In Lawrence, yer Honor.

Dr. M. In Lawrence? Well, then, we can't take her here. •

Mrs. O'H. And fhat for wad she be taken here, docthur, I dunno?

Dr. M. Mrs. O'Harrigan, will you tell me what ails your daughter-in-law, anyway?

Mrs. O'H. Sure noo, docthur darlint, I don't know as anythin' ails the craythur, barrin' her laziness.

Dr. M. But don't you want to get your daughter-in-law into the hospital?

Mrs. O'H. What for shud I be wantin' to get me poor Ellen intil the horrspitil whin you've killed me Patherick for me, — savin' yer Honor's prisince, — and shtaied his blue coat wid brash buttons on it, thafe o' the warld that ye are! Not manin' yerself, docthur jewel, but the dirrthy saxtent what buried me b'y in his besht blue coat, may the Avil Wan fly away wid him!

Dr. M. Well, Mrs. O'Harrigan, will you tell me what it is you want?

Mrs. O'H. I wants me Patherick's besht blue coat wid brash buttons ontill it, begorra!

Dr. M. Patience, woman! I have n't got your son's coat.

Mrs. O'H. Be shparin' o' yjur lies, and don't shpread 'em round so fray and aisy loike; ye may put 'em till a better use afore ye die than shpindin' 'em on me. 'T was me own son, Patherick O'Harrigan, that died here wid the shmall-pox — Hivin risht his sowl! — and that lazy shlut of a wife give ye his whole beauthiful new dresh shirt till bury him in, that might have bought me many a gill o' whiskey to cheer the cockles o' me harrt, that's most broke wid gravin' over me poor b'y, and it's the blue coat wid the brash buttons that I'll be afther havin'.

Dr. M. My good woman, if your son died of the small-pox, there is no power on earth that can get his coat for you.

Mrs. O'H. Fhat's that? Not his blue coat wid the brash buttons on it?

Dr. M. No, not his blue coat with the brass buttons on it. [*Leaves his desk, and approaches Mr. and Mrs. Von Drumble. Mrs. O'Harrigan places herself directly in front of him, with her arms akimbo.*]

Mrs. O'H. Give me me Patherick's brash coat wid the blue buttons on it, or I'll pit a head on ye, ye black nagur! Give me back me brash Patherick's coat wid the blue buttons on it, ye bluidy thafe o' the world! [*Shaking fist at him.*]

Dr. M. Mrs. Von Drumble, we will carry out your husband now. [*Calls.*] Tom! Hillo, Tom!

Mrs. O'H. I'll say if I can't get me Patherick's blue buttons wid the brash coat on it! I'll say the Mayor, and the Common Council, and the Schule Committee, I will! I'll have the perlice up afther ye! I'll make it hot for yeze, ye murdherin' ould shooisider! Och.

out wuddent I loike till smash that foine nose o' yourn, arrah !

[While Mrs. O'H. is speaking, Tom enters and assists Dr. Mildmay to carry out H. P., followed closely by Mrs. O'H., threatening with her fists. Just as they leave the room, Mrs. O'H. clutches the doctor's hair, giving it a pull which causes him to shriek and drop H. P., who yells with pain, while his wife groans in concert. Great confusion, giving the impression that a free fight is taking place outside.]

[It is the duty of the examining physician to write down in a book the name, place of birth, residence, business, and ailment of each applicant, copy the same on a slip of paper, and send it by the boy, with the patient, to the ward doctor.]

JANE'S LEGACY.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. JANE SAMPSON.

MISS BAXTER.

MRS. MARTHA HOLLAND.

ROBERT SAMPSON.

MRS. MINNIE WILLIAMSON.

SQUIRE THORNDIKE.

SCENE. — *Interior of a cottage. Table, two chairs, bench, or high stool; practical kitchen stove if possible, but may be omitted. Off the stage, opposite the door, a tablecloth and some coarse dishes should be concealed. Enter Jane hurriedly, with a shawl over her head, dress pinned up, long apron on.*

Jane. Hurry up, Jane, or your table will not be set by the time Bob gets home. [*Throws shawl on chair, and looks out of window.*] There he is now, the dear fellow! [*Kisses hand and nods, then busies herself about setting table. Enter Bob.*]

Bob. Well, little wife, how's supper?

Jane. All ready; you are just in time. The baked potatoes are crisp as crisp can be, and the corn bread done to a turn.

Bob. [*hangs up coat and hat, then stands back toward stove*]. Well, isn't this true comfort, after all is said and done? A tidy house, a cheerful wife, and the

proud consciousness that I owe no man a dollar. What if we have no carpet on our floor, nor butter on our table? Love and mutual confidence are the best luxuries. I tell you, Jane, I am richer to-day in your companionship than old Jake Dutton was with all his hoarded wealth.

Jane. What a flatterer you are, Bob! but I guess you would be glad, for all that, to get some of old Jake Dutton's hoarded wealth.

Bob. But not to exchange you for it. [*Tries to embrace her; she runs behind the table coquettishly. Enter Miss Baxter.*]

Miss Baxter. I come right in without knockin', fur I'm in a norful hurry. [*Sits down. Bob takes a chair on the other side of the table, manifesting considerable impatience.*]

Jane. That is right, you must not be ceremonious with us, Miss Baxter. Won't you take off your things and stay to tea?

Miss B. Dreadful suds! no, child, I told you I was in a norful hurry; but I thought I must stop in, for prehaps ye'd like to hear the news. I've been down to old Jake Dutton's funeral, you see. Do set down, Jane; I can't never talk when anybody's stan'in' up all ready to run. I've been down to the funeral, as I said, an' now *who* do you think is his administrator?

Jane. I don't know. [*Bob begins paring his nails.*]

Miss B. Wall, it's your sister Martha's husband, Richard Holland.

Bob. Why not? he's the best man in town I know of for that position, or any other. He's upright, honest, a good business man, and understands the law as well as Squire Thorndike himself.

Miss B. Wall, it may be all right; but it struck me as bein' mighty queer, till I found out *who* the heir was. I thought at fust 't was because he was rich. Ain't it strange how things is ordered? There's your sister Martha, with her silks and satins and fine house, chaney and silver on her table every day, an' you livin' from hand to mouth, and all in one room, as you might say. [*Catching Jane by the dress.*] Do set still! where be ye goin' to?

Jane. I must tend to the oven, Miss Baxter. Everything will burn up.

Miss B. I won't be a minute; set down and do listen. Now who do you s'pose Jake Dutton made his heir?

Jane [*indifferently*] I don't know. The Pepperils are his relatives.

Miss B. None of his! His wife's relations. They was all there, though,—the only mourners the' was; but he didn't give 'em much. I could see they was disap'nted when the will was read.

Bob. How did *you* happen to hear the will read? Did you sit with the mourners?

Miss B. No, I didn't; but I set in the next room, with my head agin a crack in the plashurin'. I could see right into the room, when I got my eye agin the crack, an' I could hear every word right through as plain as day. Now, whether 't was because he had a kind o' sneakin' fancy for your wife, or whether he thought she'd had a pretty hard row to hoe, and desarved some of the good things of this life, I dunno. But howsumdever—

Bob. If you will just leave my wife out of your

story, and get through with it as soon as possible, it will be more agreeable. Jane does not need anybody's pity.

Jane. Oh, now, Bob, how excited you are getting! Did n't old Dutton have a sister, Miss Baxter?

Miss B. [stiffly]. I dunno whether he had or not. But he did n't leave her nothin' anyway, an' she war n't at the funeral nuther.

Bob. She married somebody off in York State that he did n't like. I believe he never had anything to do with her afterward.

Miss B. Wall, now, it does seem to me as if I've heerd tell about her. Married a nigger, did n't she?

Jane. Married a negro?

Bob. No, he was white enough: steward, I believe, on one of the Sound boats.

Miss B. Wall, that's just what I've heerd; an' I put it to you, Bob Sampson, if waiters an' stewards, an' them kind, ain't allus *black*? For if they ain't, they ain't.

Bob. Well, in this case, *they ain't*. And now if you think it of any importance to us to hear who old Dutton made his heir, and will tell us, and let Jane go, I shall be thankful, for I'm hungry.

Jane. Men are always cross when they're hungry, Miss Baxter, as I suppose you know, so you must excuse Bob for being so terribly savage; and come, now, tell us who it is, and how much he has got.

Miss B. Wall, the money is ten thousand dollars; but the heir ain't a he, but a she.

Jane. Dear me! 't is n't you?

Miss B. Not quite; but somebody that's pretty nigh to me jest now.

Jane. What! not your niece, Betsey Ann?

Miss B. Sakes alive! no, though Betsey Ann is as purty a girl as there is in Snippit.

Bob. Hadn't you better take up those potatoes, Jane?

Miss B. Wall, now, it does sound well to hear you orderin' round a ten-thousand-dollar heiress in that style, now, don't it?

Bob. A ten-thousand-dollar heiress?

Jane. Miss Baxter! what do you mean?

Miss B. I mean exactly what I said, an' nothin' more nor less. *Jane Sampson* — that was exactly what I heerd through that crack in the plaschurin'. "All the remainin' portions, which amount to ten thousand dollars, I give and bequeath to Jane Sampson." Wall, I won't stop no longer.

Bob. Oh, yes, Miss Baxter, do stop a minute. Take off your bonnet, and eat supper with us, can't you? We have n't very much, but I don't suppose a ten-thousand-dollar heiress — how is that, little wife? — would mind running down to the store and buying a can of peaches and some smoked salmon, on account.

Miss B. Thank ye kindly, but I can't stop. I've got some more calls to make on my way home.

Bob. Are you sure that you are right about that legacy?

Miss B. Sure I am right? Am I sure what you're sayin' this minute, Bob Sampson? I ain't deaf yit, thank my stars!

Bob. That's so. I'm sorry you are in such a hurry. [*Shakes hands energetically.*] Do stop in oftener — as often as you can. Good by. [*Exit Miss B.*] Well, Jane, how do you intend to invest your money?

Jane. In a handsome house, splendidly furnished. Such soft carpets and heavy curtains, and plenty of books, pictures —

Bob [*sneeringly*]. And a piano, I suppose.

Jane. Yes, a piano; for if I cannot play myself, my daughters will. My children shall have every advantage. The girls shall go to boarding-school, and the boys to college.

Bob. Not if they are my boys as well as yours, ma'am. You may throw away your money in any other way, — and you will soon come to the end of it. I guess, — but not one of my boys shall ever step inside a college door.

Jane. I'd like to see you prevent it. I've got the money, and I shall spend it as I please. Talk about coming to the end of it! I would like to see how you would have made it fly if old Dutton had been fool enough to leave it in your name. What with wine, cigars, fast horses, and fast women —

Bob. Jane, what are you talking about?

Jane [*sobbing*]. I'm talking about what I know. It always spoils men to grow suddenly rich. But I never thought it would make you such a mean, stingy old curmudgeon.

Bob. Mean! stingy! who is mean and stingy?

Jane. You are, when you sneer about the girls' piano, and won't let the boys go to college.

Bob. If you want to ruin 'em every one, send 'em to college. I never yet saw a college-bred man who was not either a fool or a villain.

Jane. There's Richard Holland. He's neither, certainly.

Bob. Holland? The conceited dunderhead! He's rich, and that's the most you can say for him.

Jane. Why, Bob, I've heard you say a thousand times that there was not a man in Snippit equal to Richard Holland.

Bob. Well, if I did, it was to keep peace in the family. You are always praising Holland. 'Tis a pity that you could n't have caught him, and left Martha for me. I would n't have looked at you twice if your sister Martha had been single. And I suppose Holland thought so, too.

Jane. Martha! She would n't have touched you with the tip of her finger, — anybody that sprung from as low a family as you did. Martha's proud, and I am not, and this is what I get for marrying beneath myself.

Bob. Beneath you! Well, that does sound well, when you have n't a decent relative in the world but that detestable old Aunt Susan.

Jane. Yes, and how often have you thanked Aunt Susan for bringing me up to be such a good house-keeper and cook?

Bob. Humph! and what do you cook? Potatoes, salt pork, hasty pudding — stuff fit for hogs.

Jane. Stuff fit for hogs! Who provided it?

Bob [after a pause]. Well, I'll provide better food after this.

Jane. I'd like to know how? It's I who have the money, and not one cent of it shall you ever touch.

Bob. Oh, come, Jane —

Jane. You provided for yourself before, and I suppose you can now.

Bob. Well, look here, if we are going to have separate purses in that way, we might as well have separate houses.

Jane. So I think myself.

Bob [*stares at her a moment, then takes coat and hat*]. Very well, ma'am. This is the last time you shall say that to me, if there is a divorce lawyer in the old Bay State. [*Pulls hat over his eyes and stalks out.*]

Jane [*sobbing hysterically*]. A divorce! a divorce! Oh, he never meant it, surely. Bob, Bob, oh, Bob! what shall I do! what shall I do! I wish that old legacy was at the bottom of the sea. I'll never touch a cent of it. Never, never, never! A poor, miserable, wretched divorced wife! [*Throws her apron over her head and cries. Enter Martha.*]

Mar. Why, Jenny, Jenny, what is the matter?

Jane. Oh, Martha, Bob has gone off to — to — get — a — a — divorce!

Mar. A divorce?

Jane. Yes, it's true, it's true. We got into a quarrel about the children. He said [*indignantly*] that the boys should never go to college.

Mar. The boys! What boys?

Jane. Our boys.

Mar. Your boys! Why, Jane, you have n't any children: are you crazy?

Jane [*laughing hysterically*]. No, Martha, I am not crazy yet, though I think this horrid legacy will drive me wild. 'Tis the boys I expect to have that I want educated for gentlemen, now I have ten thousand dollars.

Mar. You, Jenny! Ten thousand dollars! How did you get it?

Jane. What, has n't Richard told you that Mr. Dutton made me his heiress, — left me ten thousand dollars?

Mar. Why, Jenny, it is no such thing. Who told you so?

Jane. What, Martha, ain't I his heiress?

Mar. No, indeed. Truly you are not, but his sister's husband, James Hanson.

Jane. James Hanson! James Hanson! Well, that does sound like Jane Sampson. Oh, if Bob only knew it! Oh, I should be the happiest woman in the world if he would only return.

Mar. Where is he, Jenny? I must find him.
[*Knock at the door.*] There's a knock.

Jane. Oh, Martha, go to the door, please. [*Voice without:* "Good afternoon, Mrs. Holland. How happy I am to meet you!"] Mrs. Williamson, the minister's wife! [*Unpins her dress. Second voice without:* "Good afternoon, good afternoon. Happy to see you on this auspicious occasion." Squire Thorndike! [*Enter Mrs. Williamson, followed by Squire Thorndike.*]

Mrs. W. Good afternoon, my dear Mrs. Sampson. [*Kisses her.*] How happy I am to see you looking so well. It is not sickness, then, that has kept you from church so long?

Jane [*dusting chair with apron*]. Oh, no, I'm well enough, but I have n't anything fit to wear. The congregation all dress so much. Do take a chair, Mrs. Williamson.

Mrs. W. [*sitting*]. That impediment will soon be removed.

Jane [dubiously]. I hope so. [*Hurriedly clears dishes from table. Meanwhile Squire T., in dumb show, desires Martha to take the other chair. She refuses, pressing him to take it. Squire insists, and finally seats himself on bench. Martha still standing.*] Oh, Squire Thorndike, don't sit on that bench! Please, Martha, fetch a chair from the bedroom. I'm sorry I have so few chairs.

[*Martha returns with chair, hands it to squire, who presents it to Jane.*]

Squire. Oblige me by taking this chair, madam. I find the bench very comfortable, indeed. [*Jane demurs. Martha making signs for her to accept it, she sits down awkwardly. Martha turns to leave the room.*] I came to talk about investing.

Jane [jumping up hurriedly]. Yes. Excuse me, Squire. Oh, Martha, are you going away? [*Aside.*] What do you suppose they have come for?

Mar. [*aside*]. Can't imagine, but I must go home.

Jane [*aside*]. Won't you try to find Bob and tell him?

Mar. I certainly will find him if he is in town. [*Kisses her. Exit Martha. Jane returns and seats herself.*]

Mrs. W. I have a special mission here to-day, dear Mrs. Sampson. All the ladies in the sewing-circle are wondering why you do not join it, so I have appointed myself a committee of one to inquire into your case. I trust you will not consider me impertinent, dear friend; but really let me press you, for after this we shall feel sadly disappointed if you are not with us next Wednesday.

Jane. You are very kind, Mrs. Williamson, but I do not know whether I can get time.

Mrs. W. Oh, you shall not disappoint us, *indeed* you shall not. And we *must* have that *splendid* husband of yours of evenings; we really *need* him.

Jane [*opening eyes very wide*]. Bob! why, he never would go in the world.

Mrs. W. Oh, he *must* come, indeed. The ladies just *insist*.

Jane. Well, I did not know that anybody but me ever saw anything in Bob before. I don't think I shall dare let him go out alone evenings, if all the ladies admire him so.

Squire. How is Mr. Sampson now? Ahem!

Jane. Mr. Sampson? Pa Sampson? Oh, he's very well this fall, thank you; his rheumatism does not trouble him much.

Squire. H'm! I intended to inquire for your husband, Mr.—*h'm*—*Robert* Sampson.

Jane. Oh, Bob? Why, he's well; nothing ever ails him.

Squire. I am happy to hear it. Good health is indeed a great blessing, one that is very rarely appreciated. And now about that little investment. Although my visit may seem—ah! premature—still, when we consider the auspicious—*h'm*!—yes, really unparalleled events of the day—we must be allowed to overstep somewhat the usual bounds of ceremony. I presume, Mrs. Sampson, that you have already been informed of your good fortune.

Jane [*vaguely*]. Yes—

Mrs. W. Pardon me for not congratulating you on that little circumstance. I had *really* forgotten it.

Jane. What circumstance? I wish you would tell me what you are talking about.

Mrs. W. Ah! then you have not heard of the legacy?

Squire. Sho! you have not been told, then, of Mr. Jacob Dutton's generosity?

Jane. Mrs. Martha Holland, who certainly ought to know, tells me that James Hanson, his sister's husband, received ten thousand dollars' worth of Jacob Dutton's property.

Squire and Mrs. W. Who?

Jane. James Hanson.

Mrs. W. James *Hanson*! What an outlandish name! who ever heard of it before?

Squire. Ahem! it seems that I have been misinformed.

Mrs. W. [*aside*]. And so have I. That deaf old Betsey Baxter! What a scrape she has got me into!

Squire. I beg ten thousand pardons, Jane, for my awkward blunder, hah! I hope you will overlook it. H'm! give my respects to Bob. I wish you a very good afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Jane [*rising*]. Good afternoon.

Mrs. W. [*rising*]. Really I have stayed too long. I am quite *grieved* to tear myself away so unceremoniously, but I *must* go indeed. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Jane [*following to the door*]. Good afternoon. [*Crosses stage.*] Well, I declare! I am glad I am not rich, if these are the sort of visits rich folks have to endure: fawning flatterers who come to see my *money*, not *me*! Heigho! I hope they were pleased with the

view. I never felt so awkward in my life. [*Enter Bob.*] O you dear, darling, precious old Bob, where have you been? Have you seen Martha?

Bob [*catching her by the elbows*]. Yes, I've seen her, and she's set it all straight. [*Kisses her.*] What confounded fools we were! That is, *I* was.

Jane. And so was I. Only to think that a little money should so have turned my head! But what are we to do for supper? everything in the oven must be burned to a coal, and there's not another thing in the house to eat.

Bob. Martha sent word that we were to come up there to tea.

Jane. Did she? Bless her kind heart! she must have smelled the bread and potatoes burning. Mrs. Williamson did, I know.

Bob. Mrs. Williamson? Has she been here?

Jane. Yes, she and Squire Thorndike. Came to help me to dispose of my property.

Bob. What, both the grandees? Well, how do you like playing rich folks?

Jane [*shrugging her shoulders*]. Don't ask me. [*Takes her shawl.*] Where's my hat? I'll be ready in a moment. [*Exit both.*]

LEFT.

A RAILROAD EPISODE.

CHARACTERS:

MRS. MATILDA DOBBS. A widow lady of tender memories —
“she, as was 'Tilda Bottlenose.”

MR. JEDEDIAH JONES . . . A bachelor of crushed hopes.

COSTUMES:

Modern styles. *Mrs. Dobbs.* — Very coquettish mourning.

Mr. Jones. — With umbrella, and fastidiously neat appearance.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *A depot, barrenly furnished. Posters and time-cards on wall. Three chairs and a table. Enter Mr. Jones in a great rage.*

Jones. Well! I like this! it is the most provoking incident that ever occurred to me in the course of my life. I could swear. Missed my train by ten minutes, owing to this infernal change of time. Bother! fiddlesticks! it is enough to make a man swear. But *I* never swear. No, Jedediah Jones, when you feel like swearing, take your umbrella so, bring it down so — [*with a rap*] and then it is all over with! No need to swear *then* — it would be foolish. Why, what the devil

would be the use! Heigh-ho! I might as well make the best of it. It is pouring rain out, too. A wild night. A night when the houseless widow and the childless orphan might — however, *more* of that anon. Just now, the noblest sentiment must succumb to comfort. I will make a nightcap of my handkerchief, place two chairs together, and sleep. And dream — “perchance to dream,” as our friend Hamlet hath it. “There’s the rub!” To dream of my youth, when I made mud pies, and played with Tilly Bottlenose! Well, “’Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all,” as Hamlet remarks further on. Ah! now, this — is comfort. [*Arranges himself upon two chairs, and falls asleep.*]

[*Enter Mrs. Dobbs in great haste and agitation.*]

Mrs. Dobbs. There! I have missed my train. Too bad — too bad! Will have to wait four hours in this miserable place, until the midnight train. I always miss a train! I knew my watch was a little fast, so I just deducted about twenty minutes, and here I am left by my train. At night too! Alone and unprotected! Ah! if poor Job had lived! But I cannot touch upon that topic without tears. It was always a comfort that I had him buried so handsomely. A \$40 coffin, with solid silver handles. The undertaker swore they were solid. He said I might put my tongue to ’em and see. I fancied they tasted brassy, but I had a severe cold at the time. Ah! how sad is life! Ah! Dobbs, Dobbs, could you see your ’Tilda now, how it would grieve you!! [*Jones snores melodiously. Mrs. Dobbs starts.*] What! a man, and snoring! Heavens! what shall I do!

Jones [*awakening and gazing sleepily at her*]. Hello! a female, so help me Jehosaphat!

Mrs. Dobbs [*perceiving him aroused*]. Oh, mercy! a man! Oh! I shall faint — and with — with — a nightcap — Oh! [*Hides her face.*]

Jones [*rising and approaching*]. My dear madame, do not be alarmed. I am only like yourself, a be —

Mrs. Dobbs [*glancing up*]. Oh — Oh! [*Faints in his arms.*]

Jones. Now, this is a charming situation! Madame, come to; revive, revive, I say. Now, what am I to do? Stick a pin in her and bleed her? throw water on her — there isn't any handy, and she is deuced heavy too. Now, Jedediah Jones, if you ever swore, by jingo! you'd do it now. Ah! she revives. Madame!

Mrs. Dobbs [*faintly*]. Remove — the — nightcap.

Jones [*removing it in savage surprise*]. The deuce take the nightcap! I forgot I had it on!

Mrs. Dobbs. Forgive my agitation, sir; I was not aware of your presence.

Jones. Certainly, madame. [*Aside*] Why, she is quite charming! Married, I wonder?

Mrs. Dobbs. A lady, alone and unprotected, I am naturally a little nervous, and the — the nightcap quite overcame me.

Jones. Pardon the nightcap, madame; it was only my handkerchief in disguise. But do I understand aright? you are alone? a maiden — ah! that is, a lady with no available male attachment?

Mrs. Dobbs [*with dignity*]. Sir, no! I am widow of the late Job Dobbs. Ah! sir, you know not what it is to lose a husband!

Jones. No, madame, I never had a husband — a — or — that is, I never had but *one* loss and that was a great one.

Mrs. Dobbs. Ah! indeed! tell me your grief. I have a sympathetic mind.

Jones. I loved once — and lost —! [*aside*] my pocket-book. Jove! she is charming! [*Rubs his hands gleefully.*]

Mrs. Dobbs [*affected*]. Ah! sir, to weep and toil is our lot below.

Jones. Alas! too true. And now, as we are both belated, let us be social. To-night is a wild, uncanny one. The wind blows, and the rain falls. It is a night when beneath a sheltering roof one might be comfortable — even confidential. Mrs. Dobbs, let us talk of the days of our youth!

Mrs. Dobbs [*a little stiffly*]. Sir, the days of my youth have not so remote a date that there are no unpleasant instances to recall.

Jones. Pardon me, madame. I did not mean to insinuate anything so base. Undoubtedly, there are moments when every distinct spanking, doll-breaking episode of your life confronts you. For me those times are over. But these periods, madame, when our hearts seem open to repining thoughts of our earliest youth; when regret, like a bird storm-driven from its nest, rushes to our bosoms — and — and — [*aside*] confound it, I never *was* made for sentiment!

Mrs. Dobbs [*who listens intently*]. How sweet! yes, I comprehend you perfectly. At such moments the late Job D. returns to me, in all his — pardon my emotion! [*Weeps.*]

Jones [*aside*]. If I was not resolved on no occasion to swear, I would say: Hang the late J. D.

Mrs. Dobbs. Ah! sir, you little know how you have touched my heart!

Jones. Madame, to come under any circumstances near your heart, is joy for me.

Mrs. Dobbs. Ah, sir!

Jones. It is, indeed. When I stand here, and recount the many years I have spent without knowing you, my feelings, like billows [*spreads his arms, moving them to represent a wavelike motion*] of the mighty ocean, bound — [*suddenly starts, putting his hand on his nose*]. Why! I certainly felt a drop of rain. The roof of this depot must leak.

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! heavens! what a situation! And I have no umbrella, and my best crape veil on, two dollars a yard and no discount for cash. Horrible!

Jones [*eagerly*]. No — no, charming, I protest! Come, madame, we will place two chairs thus — [*places chairs side by side*] there! raise my umbrella, *thus* [*raises umbrella*], and here we are, snug and cosey.

[*Both sit, Mrs. Dobbs looking coyly pleased, Jones radiant.*]

Mrs. Dobbs. Very nice, I am sure. You remind me so of dear Job. He too was always thoughtful.

Jones. Ah! very glad, I am sure, to awaken pleasant memories.

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! he was *so* considerate!

Jones. How could he be otherwise? *I* never loved but once — but no! I will not continue. I bore you.

Mrs. Dobbs. No, no; pour out your troubles. I

can weep with those who weep, and be glad with those who rejoice.

Jones. How accommodating! But in truth my first and only love affair began and ended at the early age of ten!

Mrs. Dobbs. So young? Constant heart!

Jones. Yes! I made mud pies with her. I shared apples, peanuts, and sweeties with her. I saved my pocket money to invest in a doll; I even gave her my chewing gum, after I had the first turn at it, and yet she forgot me!

Mrs. Dobbs. Shocking! I declare.

Jones. Her name re-echoes sadly in my memory still.

Mrs. Dobbs. Ah! tell me the creature's name; it shall be my symbol of cruelty.

Jones. Alas! she was known and loved as "Tilda Bottlenose!

Mrs. Dobbs [*screaming*]. Ow! Ow! Ow!

Jones [*struggling with umbrella*]. Madame, why this agitation? Can it be — yes — yes — it must be — Oh! hang the bumbershoot! [*Flings umbrella away, clasps Mrs. Dobbs wildly.*] It is — Matilda!

Mrs. Dobbs [*tenderly*]. Jedediah!

Jones [*recoiling*]. Matilda! [*Embraces again.*]

Mrs. Dobbs [*same*]. Jedediah!

Jones. What happiness to meet again! Rapture! untold bliss! Let me gaze upon you.

Mrs. Dobbs. Jedediah — the boy of my youthful affections, with just the same smile. And yes! it is truly the very same front teeth gone!*

* Jedediah's lack of front teeth is accomplished by a little black wax spread over the front teeth. It gives a very comical effect.

Jones [*delightedly*]. Pulled 'em out on taffy, at Mirandy Hall's candy-pull — you remember?

Mrs. Dobbs. Of course, and you put some candy in Mirandy's chair to cool —

Jones. And you —

Mrs. Dobbs. Sat down on it, ruined my frock — and you insisted it only transformed the goods, as it became sat-in! Ha — ha — ha!

Jones. Ha — ha — ha —! [*Both laugh.*]

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! those rare old times! But, Jed, I guess you will have to raise the — umbrella again.

[*They reseal themselves, raising the umbrella.*]

Jones. Now, isn't this comfortable? Who would have thought it!

Mrs. Dobbs. Who, indeed! and you really cared for little 'Tilda Bottlenose, Jed?

Jones [*wanting to prove affectionate, but encumbered by the umbrella*]. Of course, I did, 'Tilda. [*Aside*] Oh! this umbrella!

Mrs. Dobbs [*coquettishly*]. But you have never forgiven her false desertion?

Jones. Oh! I think I could bring myself to do so. I will endeavor to forget a dark past, in looking forward to a bright future!

Mrs. Dobbs [*persuasively*]. Do — Jed, my dear! [*They sit, looking at one another in pleased embarrassment. Jed tries to embrace her, but is prevented by the umbrella.*]

Jones. Matilda, you used to sing in days gone by.

Mrs. Dobbs [*modestly*]. A little!

Jones. If I remember, your voice was like a lark.

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! no. I warble a little for my own pleasure.

Jones. Then, for mine !

Mrs. Dobbs. Well, I will try *one* song for you, Jed.

[*She sings sentimentally at him. Any song can be introduced here, of a sufficiently sentimental nature.*]

Jones [*as she finishes, and holding the umbrella in one hand*]. "Tilda ! can't you *help* me hold this umbrella ?

[*She takes hold the handle with one hand. He clasps his over it, and puts his arm around her waist.*]

Mrs. Dobbs [*shyly*]. Oh ! Jed ! [*Drops her head on his shoulder.*]

Jones. Now we are very comfortable. Tilly, my dear, I never forgot you ; did you forget me ?

Mrs Dobbs. Never ! I often said to my late husband — "Job, my dear, I never would have married you, if you had not resembled my lost Jones !"

Jones. Unpleasant for him — but joy for me. He has gone to his last rest.

Mrs. Dobbs. Yes, dear man — as I had placed upon his tomb in the north corner of the cemetery, with forty-dollar coffin, solid silver handles, seventy-five carriages at the funeral, and flowers too numerous to mention — "Requiescat in pace."

Jones. Ah ! I hope so. You certainly did well by him.

Mrs. Dobbs. As I shall by you, Jed !

Jones. Not in that way, my dear, I hope, for some time ! And, now, how did you come to be left ?

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh ! the horrid time-tables ! they are all changed, and I never understand them.

Jones. They are very perplexing.

Mrs. Dobbs. Just like the fifteen puzzle. My poor

Job never could arrange the fifteen puzzle. Many a time he has said to me, "Matilda, this puzzle is like *you!*" Now, I was dear Job's second; his first being buried in the very north corner of the cemetery, where he now lies. So I would say: "Why like me, Job? was I a problem to you?" "No, Tilly," says he, "but this puzzle, like you, is *one* too many for me!" Ah! dear, dear Dobbs, how he loved me!

Jones. There! there! peace to his ashes. And wasn't it a miracle we were left?

Mrs. Dobbs. Yes, and I am so glad!

Jones. So am I. Don't you think, 'Tilda, you could — [*smacks his lips suggestively.*]

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh — no — no! the publicity!

Jones. Oh! come. Do not be shy. We will just shut the umbrella —

Mrs. Dobbs. No — oh, no! — keep it up —

[*She lowers it to the exclusion of the audience, and a fervent kiss is heard exchanged.*]

Jones [*raising umbrella again*]. And now it must be time for the train to start.

Mrs. Dobbs. [*shyly*]. I hope not Jeddy!

Jones. Shall I lower the umbrella again, 'Tilda?

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! no — no. But what is the time?

Jones. Madame, by my watch it is half-past eleven. But by my heart, madame, my *heart*, 'tis but eight o'clock, and the balmy evening in your charming presence is just begun.

Mrs. Dobbs. Oh! Jed!

Jones. Let me, 'Tilda, lower this screen again?

Voice [*without*]. All aboard for the 11:30 train — Hamilton and way-stations!

Jones. There! we must now part for a short time.

Mrs. Dobbs. Only for a short time. And let us hope, dear Jed, that all who are likewise afflicted by detention, may learn, as we have learned to-night, the happy result of getting left.

[Quick curtain, as they gather up their property to depart.]

N. B. The performance occupies about twenty-five minutes. Much can be added to the fun by a few local hits.

POOR PETER.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

ALITEA, A Spanish Ballet-Dancer.

TIA PAULA, Aunt to Alitea.

POOR PETER,

THEODORIC SYLVESTER YORK,

JAMISON JAMES,

WALLACE,

DRAKE,

} Admirers of Alitea.

SCENE. — *Alitea's room. Table, RIGHT FRONT, piled with letters. Simulated cook-stove, RIGHT BACK; chair by table, another LEFT FRONT; closet, L.; door, L.; principal entrance, R.; two windows, BACK. Music. Curtain rises. Enter Alitea, R., in ballet-dress, with castanets. Takes cachuca steps ending with flourish, CENTRE FRONT. Music ceases.*

Al. Ah, how charming, *deliciosa*, is the life of a *dancerin*, — a ballet-dancer! Such lots of lovers! Eh? now that is good American word, — lots. Lots of lovers. Ah, I see the postman has been here. [*Approaches table, slipping off right castanet. Examines letters.*] Psha! *He* writes to me every day; he is become stale. [*Throws letter one side and takes another.*] Pooh! [*Throws aside several in succession, humming*

cachuca and playing castanet in unison. Music.] Ah! here is a new hand. [Pulls off left castanet.] Do you know what this señor will say? He will say, "I love you to distraction: will you be my wife?" He will say, "If you refuse me I shall kill myself." [Comes down.] They all say that. But [sighs] they do not kill themselves. Perhaps [archly] because I never refuse them. How can I? I love all the men. [Reads letter.]

DONNA ALITEA:

Dear Miss, — I love you to distraction. Grant me an interview. I shall be on the street opposite your windows at two o'clock this (Friday) P. M. There I shall remain until you recognize me with a wave of the handkerchief. Um — um — um — um — etc.

Yours, ardently,

JAMISON JAMES.

[Laughs.] That señor is very easily satisfied, do you see? He remains until I wave my pañuelo. I wave it, he goes. Let me hasten to wave it. Two o'clock? Ah! [looking vaguely around,] what time is it now? O Poverttee! Would that some one of my lovers could think that I would more gladly welcome one little Connecticut clock with wooden wheels, than many baskets of flowers containing amorous letters. It may be two o'clock now. He may be already here. [Runs to window.] He is there! Standing like a statue and gazing upward. He cannot move until I wave my pañuelo, my [coming down] — how does he call it? — handkerchief. Ach! How these Americans talk with the teeth! Have I not one? [Searching about.] My aunt, has she sold my lovers' gifts? All? Handker-

chiefs of silk, handkerchiefs of lace, handkerchiefs of fine linen, have they all gone for meat and potatoes? So much the better for the stomach, so much the worse for the nose. Now let me think. There is Poor Peter's. Ah, I had forgotten it! Poor Peter, he is sharp — very good American word, sharp. [*Producing handkerchief from closet.*] Thus he has his name and also my own embroidered upon his little gift. Thus my aunt, my avaricious and commercial Tia Paula, cannot sell it to the merchant, cannot straightway metamorphose it into salt fish and onions. [*Looks from window.*] Heavens! What behold I? Two señors, both walking up and down, both looking at my windows. I am distracted! If I wave my *pañuelo*, what does the second señor? Takes he also his departure, or comes he directly to my rooms? He is very handsome. Ah, his letter must be here. [*Runs to table, finds letter, and reads.*]

— Distracting and evanescent dream of delight —

Can he then mean me? Am I a dream of delight, and am I also evanescent?

— Sitting — enthroned — inmost —

Oh, I cannot read it!

— Adorable — agonizing — torrents of — unquenchable —

Oh, here comes the handkerchief.

— Inexpressible favor — moment's interview — wave from thy right bower window a morsel of handkerchief, and behold me at thy feet a chained and unresisting slave. Ever thy helpless yet willing adorer, I remain, kissing thy fairy-like pedal extremities,

THEODORIC SYLVESTER YORK.

Now then — very good American word, now then — I have my *pañuelo*. Vanish Señor James, appear Señor York. [*Goes to window and waves handkerchief.*] They both stop, they both look. The one does not go, the other does not come. They talk. Now we shall see! [*Advances, making lunge as with dagger.*] Soh, sirrah! [*Looks again.*] Psha! these Americanos! Adios, señor! All right! [*Kisses hand, indicative of the amicable separation of the two. Comes down.*] Soh! Poor Peter's *pañuelo*, you may return to your repose. Poor Peter! I had almost forgotten him. He has not been here to-day. We are — how does he say — engaged. Ach! it takes all one's teeth to say it. Engaged! No wonder these Americanos all have false teeth; they wear out their own biting off their words.

[*Enter York and James in a rage, R.*]

J. Did n't you wave your handkerchief?

Y. Did you wave your handkerchief?

J. You waved your handkerchief, — didn't you, now?

Y. I swear that you waved your handkerchief!

Al. *Si*, señors, I did wave my handkerchief. [*Aside.*] Now will they fight?

J. She waved her handkerchief to me: do you understand?

Y. She waved it to me: do you understand?

J. Did n't you wave it to me?

Y. Did n't you wave it to me?

Al. *Si*, señors, I waved it to you. [*Aside.*] Now, then, they will fight.

J. To me?

Y. [*putting himself forward*]. To me?

Al. *Si*, señors, to both of you. See here, your two letters. In the one it says, If you wave your handkerchief, I come to you.

Y. and J. together. That was my letter.

Al. But, gentlemen, in this other letter it says, If you wave your handkerchief I will go away.

Y. and J. together. Did you write that, fellow?

J. You sneak!

Y. You puppy! [*Both turn backs and walk off.*]

Al. Oh, they will not fight! Señors [*opening letter*], to whom belongs the inestimable name of Jamison James?

J. That's me.

Al. Then you see you are the gentleman who must go away.

J. [*snatching letter*]. Go away!

Y. Yes, clear out! cut stick! travel! [*Snatching letter, reads.*] "Shall remain until you recognize me with a wave of the handkerchief." All right, she's recognized you. You've no call to remain here longer.

J. But —

Y. But! There are no buts about it. Come, start your boots!

J. I say —

Y. Will you leave?

J. No, I won't leave; so there!

Y. You *shall* leave; so there! [*Takes J. by collar and kicks him out.*]

Al. [*in great excitement*]. Ah, now they will fight! now they will fight! What! coming back so soon? Will you not kill him? Señor, will you not kill him? [*Clasps hands.*]

Y. Kill him! No. What should I kill him for?

Al. [*walking about*]. What, then, have you no spirit? no fire? no pride? no *valentia*?

Y. Nary a *valentia*, my honey. Come, you are not so bloodthirsty —

Al. Oh, I am, I am!

Y. Heavens and earth! So fairy-like a figure cannot be the abiding place of a bloodthirsty and vindictive spirit, more worthy to be the bosom companion of a termagant fishwoman or a brawny virago! Come, now, Alitea, it can't be, you know.

Al. I don't know. I only know I want you to kill him.

Y. But look at it in a moral point of view. Why, now, Alitea, you would n't have me be a murderer?

Al. [*clinging to his arm*]. Would n't you be a murderer for me?

Y. Heavens and earth! What shall I do?

Al. You will take a little dagger —

Y. Oh, I shall, I shall! I feel it! She'll make a murderer of me. Oh, she will, she will!

Al. [*patting on the side of neck*]. Yes, you will kill just one little man for me. See, all my Spanish lovers, they kill a man for me. In Spain [*begins crying*] there was every day one man killed, all for my sake. Every day!

Y. Alitea, Alitea, don't cry. I'll kill him. I'll kill a man every day.

Al. Ah, you will? Then I'll love you the best. You shall be my lover *par excellence*, my one dearest.

Y. Sweet creature! Let me get a pistol, a bowie-knife, a gun! One kiss, one kiss, enticing siren, ere I

depart on my bloody mission. [*Putting arm around waist.*]

Al. [*putting hands before face*]. No, no, I have made a vow.

Y. A vow! An oath? Is Venus turned vestal?

Al. Nay, señor, listen to me. I have vowed the first kiss to that lover who first kills a man for me.

Y. Bellona, Goddess of Revenge, I fly to execute thy mandates! [*Exit Y., r. Puts head back through door.*] You will be true to me?

Al. True as the needle to the pole, or the dove to her nest. [*Exit Y.*] This man is brave. He is nice, very good American word, — so nice!

[*Enter Wallace, r., pulling cod-line from pocket.*]

W. I don't know as 't is necessary to explain myself. I've told you time and time again that if you did n't stick to me I should hang myself. You have n't stuck to me, and so I'm going to hang. [*Looks about for nail.*]

Al. That is all right, if my good friend will but hang himself some other where. It will be very disagreeable to see his dead body hanging there. [*Crosses to table.*]

W. Disagreeable! Disagreeable is it, you flirt! you jilt! You think it would be disagreeable to see my dead body dangling there! [*Makes noose that will not slip in end of rope.*]

Al. Yes, it seems so; but perhaps I am mistaken. [*Sits, and looks over letters.*]

W. Oh, yes, I understand that! She intends to intimidate me by her calm behavior. But I'm as calm as she is; calm, cool, deliberate. Yes, madam, I am

deliberate. It is my deliberate purpose to hang myself on account of your perfidy. [*Mounts chair, L., and fastens line to nail.*]

Al. [*crying*]. Men are always so horrid, so inconsiderate! You will hang yourself right here, and have the wretched police coming to carry off your body, and shut poor Alitea up in jail.

W. She thinks to move me by tears, but it is too late. [*Puts head through noose, facing wall, and looks over shoulder at Alitea.*] Yes, unhappy female, it is too late! one day too late! [*Turns toward wall, pulls on rope, and appears to choke and strangle.*]

Al. What have I done to-day more than any other day?

W. [*straightening up suddenly and facing around*]. Sure enough. I don't know but what you've done it before, time and time again. But this is the first time I ever met a man coming down stairs as I came up.

Al. [*rises*]. What! is it that man, that wretched book agent, who has come between me and my love? Listen; let me explain. Listen!

W. [*turns again to wall and strangles*]. No, you sha'n't explain. I won't listen. I've heard your explanations before. I tell you I won't listen.

Al. [*running up and throwing arms around neck*]. You will listen to entreaties!

W. [*straightening up and facing about*]. I don't know that I will.

Al. [*playing with his whiskers*]. But I know, dear.

W. [*putting hands behind him*]. Look here, now, I've been bamboozled and tomfooled enough, and I don't intend to be bamboozled and tomfooled any longer.

Al. No, darling, nor are you going to wear this so shocking a necktie any longer. [*Tries to remove noose. W. holds on with both hands and retreats.*]

W. Hold on! I've got to have this thing settled. Ain't you my promised wife?

Al. Oh, I am most happy to say Yes.

W. And did n't you promise to be true to me?

Al. True as the needle to the pole or the dove to her nest.

W. That's just what you said before.

Al. And I will say it again. True as the needle to the pole or the dove to her nest

W. [*eagerly*]. Do you mean it?

Al. Can you be so cruel as to doubt poor Alitea?

W. Well, now, that is what I wanted to come at. [*Removes noose, and mounts chair to take down rope.*] Oh, ain't I the happiest man alive!

Al. And you will never treat your poor little Alitea so again?

W. Well, hardly ever!

[*Enter Drake, R.*]

Al. Good heavens! [*Rushes to meet him.*]

W. [*looking back*]. What's all this? I don't believe she's true after all. [*Gets down from chair, leaving rope hanging. Al. and D. come around in front of table.*]

D. But now my wife is dead, Alitea, and you have promised me a thousand times —

Al. I know I have promised. But it is sometimes embarrassing to keep one's promises.

D. Only last Friday you told me that as soon as my wife should die you would fly with me to Italy.

Al. Si, but I did not expect she to die so soon.

D. You are not, then, prepared to fly? [*Puts arm about waist.*]

W. Well, I might as well hang myself. [*Puts head through noose, looks back at Alitea, and groans.*]

D. Who is that fellow?

Al. He is a crazy man, a lunatic. I must go speak to him.

D. Crazy as a loon.

Al. [*taking hand of W.*]. My dearest one, my darling, pray listen to reason. That fellow is a lunatic, — raving crazy.

W. [*straightening up*]. Crazy, did you say?

Al. [*still pressing W.'s hand*]. If you would but believe poor Alitea —

[*Drake begins tearing up and down stage.*]

D. She thinks a good deal of that lunatic. She thinks a deal too much of that lunatic. Heavens! a thought comes over me. [*Slaps forehead.*] Who may that lunatic be? One of her unhappy lovers!

W. Well, he does act luney, I must say.

Al. Oh, he is. Oh, very luney!

D. So often as she has declared herself true to me, — true as the needle to the pole or the dove to its nest! If after all she proves unfaithful, — I feel it! It is true! I should also lose my senses. I should hang myself!

Al. I have to pretend all sorts of things to him.

W. [*putting arm around neck*]. You ain't pretending anything to me now, be you? For if you be, I'll hang myself right here. I will now, by thunder! [*Lays hold of rope.*]

D. All's over.

Al. [*catching W.'s hand*]. Oh, my darling! how can you torment your poor Alitea so?

D. [*takes necklace from pocket*]. This, then, may as well go into the sewer.

Al. [*screams*]. Oh, I must go to him. [*Runs to D., screaming.*] Oh, oh! Don't, don't! [*Catches D. by the arm.*] Oh, how you terrified me! Oh, my poor heart!

W. What in thunder does that mean, now?

Al. Oh, I thought I saw the glitter of steel! I thought you were about to stab — oh, my poor heart! [*Leans head on shoulder.*]

D. Dearest and most angelical of beings! It was the flash of gems that caught your eye, not the glitter of steel. Oh, say that you will fly with me.

W. Well, I might as well hang myself and have done with it. [*Puts head in noose.*]

[*Drake is about putting the necklace on Alitea's neck, when she sees Wallace and screams.*]

Al. Wait! oh, wait till I get the madman off! [*Runs to W.*] A knife! a knife! Would that I had a knife!

W. What for? To cut me down with, you miserable jilt?

Al. No, no! To pierce this poor fond heart that cannot, will not break, though stabbed with a thousand cruel reproaches!

[*Al. sinks fainting upon floor. W. springs to raise her, and with the strain the nail to which the rope is tied comes out.*]

W. I can't stand this, nohow. [*Kneels. D. flings*

down necklace and begins tearing his hair.] Won't you speak one word, Alitea?

Al. [sitting suddenly upright]. Yes, I will speak. you old fool! Don't you see you are driving that maniac into a frenzy? He tried to throttle me just now. Did you see his hands at my neck?

D. Well, madam, how long is this farce to continue?

[W. gets upon his feet. Al. holds him by coat.]

Al. Oh, don't touch him, I beg of you! He'll kill you. Only go, I can manage him!

W. and D. [shrinking into opposite corners]. He's raving crazy!

Al. [rising]. Pray go!

W. [shouts]. No, let me get hold of him! I'll throttle him.

D. [yells]. Hold him! hold him! [Crawls under table. W. kicks over table.]

Al. Now they'll fight! Now they'll fight!

[D. and W. rush around stage. D. makes for the door.]

D. Hold him, keep him! I'll have him put in an insane asylum. [Exit.]

W. I'll catch him! I'll have the fellow put in the insane asylum! [Exit.]

Al. [runs to door]. Kill him! kill him! [Listens at door. Shrieks heard outside. Al. comes down laughing. Straightens table. Goes off wing. James puts head in door.]

J. He is n't here. [Enters.] There's nobody here. [Enter Al. from wing, necklace in hand.] Oh, she's here! I've come again, you see. [Al. starts and holds necklace behind her back.]

Al. Oh, I'm glad you've come! 'Tis dull to be here all alone.

J. Alone, Alitea, you shall not be from this hour henceforth! I will stay by your side always! [*Throws himself on one knee.*] Always by your side, Alitea!

Al. [*aside*]. So he is not killed. I wonder how this happens.

J. You turn from me. Let me hope this is rather from maidenly modesty than from indifference or disgust.

Al. [*aside*]. Oh, you may.

J. Still turned aside? Oh, speak and relieve my apprehension! I beg! I implore! Only speak just one word, and I'll not detain you another minute. I'll go! I'll go right away the instant you speak to me. If you can't speak, sneeze.

[*Al. sneezes and puts Poor Peter's handkerchief to face.*]

J. [*springing up.*] May I take that as an augury, a token of—of appreciation of my—devotion, if no more. Give me some token, some sign! Well, if you can't give me anything else, give me that handkerchief,—the same, I'll swear, that you waved from the window! Give it to me, and I'll go right away.

Al. [*aside*]. How strange a way to woo,—to ask for gifts instead of making them!

J. Madam, your modesty is only surpassed by your virtue.

Al. [*aside*]. And your stupidity is scarcely surpassed even by your big feet.

J. I suppose it is n't the custom of your country to receive gentlemen without a duenna being present, and

so you feel embarrassed. But you need n't be afraid ; I won't touch you. Upon my honor I won't.

Al. [*aside*]. There seems to be little danger of it.

J. Well, I suppose it might compromise you if I was found here alone with you, and I wouldn't do that for the world. So I suppose I'd better go.

Al. [*aside*]. I think so, too.

[*J.*, with sudden attempt at playfulness, snatches handkerchief.]

J. But give me that handkerchief, will you? [*Runs around table.*]

Al. [*screams*]. You must n't! That is my —

J. Eh! your what?

Al. My uncle's, and I — think a great deal of it.

J. Then I suppose you'll think a great deal of the fellow who carries it off. [*Enter Poor Peter.*]

[*J.* tucks handkerchief in bosom and turns about, coming upon *P. P.*, who enters at that instant.]

Al. [*aside*]. Oh, Poor Peter! I'd forgotten him.

P. P. Hollo, I guess that is mine. [*Snatches handkerchief.*] Well, Alitea, what does this mean?

J. [*aside*]. Her uncle! [*Aloud.*] Look here, now. Upon my honor, I can explain.

P. P. Oh, you can!

J. I would n't compromise the lady! Upon my word, I would n't.

P. P. Oh, you would n't! [*Comes down, followed by J.*]

J. I have n't touched her. Now, I swear I have n't.

P. P. Oh, you have n't!

J. She never gave me that handkerchief. Truly, she did n't.

P. P. Oh, she did n't!

J. No, I took it without her leave.

P. P. [*suddenly wheeling upon him*]. Stole it?

J. No, not exactly. But it was n't her fault. She wanted me to go.

P. P. Well, then, why don't you go?

J. I think I'd better. Good by. I did n't mean any harm. [*Exit.*]

P. P. I will say no more about the handkerchief; that puppy has exonerated you from all blame. But, Alitea, what is that jewelry you are trying to hide behind you?

Al. [*drawing P. P. into chair, L.*]. I can explain it all, dear. You know that you are poor. [*Sits in lap.*]

P. P. Yes, just at present. Until my mine is sold.

Al. Yes, dear. And when your mine is sold, you will marry me.

P. P. Or if I get rich by my new patent medicine. I shall marry you as soon as I can realize a sufficient sum (by my various speculations) to keep you so comfortably that you will feel no inducement to run off with another fellow.

Al. But meanwhile, I am also poor. The dancer's wages are very small.

P. P. Yes, I know that, poor dear.

Al. And the aunt very avaricious. How, then, shall I live? Very simply. By selling the pretty things given me by men who are richer than my Poor Peter. See [*displaying necklace*], this represents to me coal, potatoes, bacon, onions; perhaps even a pair of rubber shoes, to keep my unfortunate little feet from the wet when I go to the theatre. Are you angry with

your poor Alitea now, — when she gives nothing, not even a kiss, for her jewels?

P. P. [*kissing her*]. No, Alitea. I believe that you are true to me.

Al. Oh, true as the needle to the pole or the dove to her nest. [*Enter W. and D. suddenly.*] Oh! there are those madmen. Here, Peter, hide that necklace. [*Runs to W.*] My dear, good friend, rejoice with me! Here is my beloved brother just come from Spain. He understands but little English, and is very deaf. Go and speak with him. [*Goes to D.; they come down R.*]

W. Ah, ahem, sir! [*Very loud.*] Itee isee onee finee day!

P. P. [*bows. Aside*]. I must humor his fancy. [*Aloud.*] Veree finee dayee.

W. [*aside*]. We are getting on famously. [*Aloud.*] How likee youee thisee countaree?

P. P. How? Howee, sirr?

W. [*louder*]. Thisee countaree, sirr. Howee likee youee itee?

P. P. [*aside*]. He takes me for a foreigner. [*Aloud.*] Veree finee, sirree.

W. [*aside*]. Why, I believe I am talking Spanish. Ahem! Sirree! —

[*Enter James. P. P. springs to feet.*]

P. P. That puppy again!

J. Hide me! Hide me somewhere!

[*P. P. takes J. by collar and pushes backward into corner, L. BACK.*]

P. P. I'll hide you!

J. Oh! oh! is *he* going to kill me, too?

Al. [*to D.*]. Now I have explained it all you will go, I am sure, for my safety if not for your own.

D. For your safety only, dear angel!

P. P. [to *J.*]. You stand there, and . . . little this other affair.

[*P. P.* crosses over to stand between *Alitea* and *Drake*, as the latter, having bidden *Alitea* adieu, is about making his exit.]

D. Adieu, dear heart, adieu!

Al. Adios! [Turns to kiss *him* good by and slaps *Peter* in face.] Oh, Poor Peter! I had forgotten you. Where is the maniac?

P. P. [slapping breast]. He is, Alitea!

[Enter *Drake* chased by *Yorick* with long knife.]

Y. Blood! blood! blood! I will kill him! I will kill somebody! Where is he? Where is anybody? [*J.* shrieks.]

W. [retreats behind chair]. Two maniacs! Thunderation!

D. [getting behind *Al.*]. Shall I crush him, Alitea? Shall I crush him like a worm?

[*Peter* leans against *W.* BACK, with arms folded.]

Y. Where shall I commence, Alitea? Shall I spit them all? One, two, three, four—hah! there he is. Let me have his blood! [*Rushes at J.*]

J. [screams]. Hold him! hold him! [*Gets behind Drake.*]

D. He is also a maniac from love. I feel that I am coming on, too. Yes, Alitea, I shall go crazy pretty soon, pretty soon.

Al. What! all of you crazy?

W., D., Y., J. [together]. Yes, all of us, Alitea.

P. P. [gloomily]. I, too, Alitea.

Al. [going up to *P. P.*]. Ah, Poor Peter! I had forgotten you.

W., D., Y., J. [*together, striking offensive attitudes*].
Him!

[*Tia Paula heard grumbling and coughing outside.*]

Al. Oh, there comes that dreadful dragon, Tia Paula! Ah, if she should find you here! Let me hide you. [*Hides James in closet, puts Drake out L.*] There, go out on to the balcony. Do not fall into the canal. Mr. Wallace, can you squeeze into the cook-stove?

W. Oh, anywhere, anywhere!

[*Alitea puts Wallace into cook-stove.*]

Al. [*to Y.*]. Into the closet with you. There, I believe they are all safe. [*Sound of parcels falling without.*]

Tia [*without*]. There goes another!

P. P. You have forgotten me, Alitea.

Al. Oh, Poor Peter! I had certainly forgotten you. Crawl under the table.

[*P. P. crawls under table. Enter Tia, arms full of bundles.*]

Tia. A lot of bundles at the foot of the stairs, Little. Go down and get 'em, child, you've got better legs than I. [*Exit Al.*] She don't make as good use of them, though: I was married six times before I was her age. [*Puts bundles on table.*] Heaps and heaps of love letters—not a rich offer among them all. These wealthy Americanos are shy. *Ay de mi!* She does n't dance as I did when I was young. [*Puts on castanets.*] I used to step out. [*Humms cachuca.*] There was fascination! I could have married a prince in my day. [*Dances cachuca. Music. Heads poke out in various directions watching. Enter Alitea with*

bundles.] I must teach you some steps, child. You don't dance as well as your old aunty, now.

[*Shriek heard in closet, followed by struggle.*]

Al. Oh, he's killed him! [*Groans heard.*] They are both killed!

Tia [*going up to stove*]. 'Tis rats, child; I've heard 'em before.

Al. No, Tia Paula, 'tis my poor lovers. I hid them together. [*Goes to closet and pulls out image of man stuffed with straw. Lays it centre of stage.*] And they have killed one another. [*Pulls second effigy from closet and lays on top of first.*]

[*Tia returns from stove, where she has been making fire.*]

Tia. Both dead? Well, now what are you going to do for a husband?

Al. Don't fret, Aunty, I've got another. [*Shriek heard on balcony.*] Oh, he's tumbled into the canal! [*Runs off L. Returns with hat and boot.*] These were hanging on the balcony rail. My poor Drake! I trust he cannot swim. [*Places hat and boot on bodies.*]

Tia. Well, was this your other lover?

Al. Another, but not the last. [*Groans, and pounding on oven door.*] Oh! oh! Tia Paula, what have you done? [*Runs up to stove, followed slowly by Tia.*]

Tia. I made a fire to get supper.

Al. And have roasted my poor lover! [*Brings out effigy of W., bent over by having rivet-wire or barrel-hoops in his legs. Lays over the other two in an arch.*] This is the last. What shall I do now?

Tia. What, the last? Have n't you got anybody to marry?

P. P. [*crawls out from under table.*] She's got me.

Al. [*clasps hands*]. Oh, my poor Peter! I had forgotten him.

[*Runs to meet Peter, who clasps her in his arms, standing just behind pile of bodies.*]

Tia. So there is one left to marry her, after all.
[*Comes down L.*]

Al. I feel so relieved to have them all off my hands.

P. P. And you will be true to me now, Alitea?

Al. True as the needle to the pole or the dove to her nest.

Curtain.

THAT BOY TOM.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS:

MR. B. SHANKLIN,
MARY SHANKLIN,

MRS. SHANKLIN,
AUGUSTINE BAKER,

TOM.

[This play does not require a curtain. Stage is set with centre-table, on which is kerosene lamp, slate, and books. Chairs on either side. Chair, R. L. corner. Sofa, L. U. corner. Entrance on each side.]

[Enter Mr. S., L., newspaper in hand. Turns up lamp.]

[Mr. S., loq.] Deuce take this kerosene! *[Enter Tom, L.]*

Tom. Deuce can't take it, father. *[Mr. S. sits, L. of table.]*

Mr. S. Why can't it? *[Opens paper.]*

Tom. 'Cause it's so *high*. The deuce can't take anything higher than itself. *[Crosses, and sits in chair, R. of table. Takes book and slate.]* Say, father, were you through square root before you got married?

Mr. S. What nonsense!

Tom. I say so too! Don't believe half the folks get through square root before they're married. Don't believe I shall, anyway. [*Figures on slate all the while he is talking.*] Oh, dam it!

Mr. S. What are you saying, sir?

Tom. Just what the army surgeon said when they asked him how he'd go to work to cut off the arm of a river. Said he, "Dam it!"

Mr. S. Well, well, tend to your books.

[*Tom turns chair around back to table, and tips up, with slate resting on knees.*]

Mr. S. Tom, stop joggling the table.

Tom. Say, father, I think the man that got up this 'rithmetic was a pig.

Mr. S. What do you mean, sir?

Tom. Mean he was good on the *square root*.

[*Enter Mrs. S., R., crosses to sofa, and sits.*]

Mr. S. Tom, give your mother a chair.

Mrs. S. No, no; keep your seat. I do not care to read.

[*Tom lets his chair fall upon its front legs with a loud bang.*]

Tom. I say, mother!

Mr. S. Stop joggling this table, and tend to your sums.

[*Tom, without rising, turns his chair around to face the table.*]

Tom. But I want to ask mother a problem.

Mrs. S. Very well, my boy, ask it. I'll do my best to answer; but you know I am not good at arithmetic.

Tom. Well, now, here goes! S'pos'n' you had

some old hag of a maiden aunt come in upon you all of a sudden, when there was great folks here, — the way they do in stories, you know, — what should you do?

Mrs. S. Treat her well, I hope. But I have no old hag of a maiden aunt.

Tom. Well, some dreadful old dowdy relation or other.

Mrs. S. I don't think I have a single relative that I can call dowdy or dreadful. There is Uncle Clark's family: they are *very* nice. There are Cousin Arabella Blaine, and Aunt Potipher: they are rather above the common. [*Rises and comes down, resting hand on back of husband's chair.*] You have not a single disagreeable relation, have you, Benjamin?

Mr. S. [*lays down paper.*] Not one but what I should feel particularly well pleased to see at any time. How is your cousin, Jerusha Higginbotham, up in Vermont?

Mrs. S. Oh! Jerusha Higginbotham! She is only a second-cousin, anyway. I never saw her, but I presume she is passable.

Tom. Has a harry of a name, though.

Mrs. S. Yes, such a dreadful name! And living in an out-of-the-way village in Vermont makes it seem as though she might be a ridiculous old woman; but she is really not so very old, and well off.

Mr. S. Leave you some money when she dies, won't she?

[*Mrs. S. crosses to chair, R., and sits. Speaks while going.*]

Mrs. S. Oh! I don't believe she knows much more about me than I do about her. [*Sits.*]

[*Enter Mary, R. Crosses to sofa.*]

Tom. Frills and tuckers! Goodness gracious! Where are you going, Mary?

Mary. I am going to — stay at home. [*Sits.*]

Tom. Expect Gus Baker?

Mary. I do.

Tom. Well, then, I'm going to quit this. Might as well try to get my lessons in a hurrah's nest. [*Erit, R.*]

Mr. S. Here's something good in this paper, about light. Wish I had some. [*Fusses with lamp.*] Mary, you must boil up this fixture, or the wick, or something. The lamp evidently needs cleaning.

Mrs. S. Yes, Benjamin.

Mary [*speaking at the same time*]. Yes, papa.

[*Both Mrs. S. and Mary go toward lamp.*]

Mrs. S. and Mary. Why, it seems light enough to me.

Mr. S. Well, then, sit down. I can't read with everybody moving about. You'll be telling me I'm growing blind next. [*Takes off glasses, and wipes them. Mrs. S. and Mary sit.*] Here's the piece. It is called, —

LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT, BUT NO LIGHT MATTER.

Mr. Jones, sitting down to the tea-table this evening, asked Mrs. Jones what made her biscuits so unusually light. She replied that she used Pratt's Lustral Oil, the great light-producer. Her son James thereupon remarked that probably Flap Doodle used the same on his hair, which made him so light-headed. The young medical student who boards at Jones's said this could hardly be, as Flap's hair was as dark as a pocket, while the use of Pratt's Lustral Oil would doubtless make it as light as a feather. Just then Bridget reported

that the chore-boy objected to working after dark, as the lantern was too heavy to carry around with him. Jones replied, "Fill the lamp with Pratt's Lustral, and it will be light enough." Then Miss Anna affirmed that the use of one lamp, filled with this famous oil, made her room as light as a cork.

Pretty good, I call that !

Mary. An advertisement of Pratt's Lustral, is n't it?

Mr. S. I don't know. Pretty good, whatever it is.

[*Knock heard.*]

[*Voice outside.* Lor! ye need n't show me the way!]

Mrs. S. Who can that be?

[*Mary rises. Enter, L., woman in flowered gown, gay shawl, enormous bonnet, goggles, and yellow curls hanging over face.*]

Woman. How de do, Mary? [*Seizes Mary's hand, and shakes it violently.*] I s'pose this is my cousin, Mary Shanklin, ain't it?

[*Mr. and Mrs. S. rise.*]

Mary. My name is Mary Shanklin.

Wom. So 'tis. Wal, Mary, kiss your relation that's come all the way from old Varmount to see ye.

[*As woman tries to kiss Mary, she draws away.*]

Mary. I think there must be some mistake.

Wom. No mistake at all! I'm your second-cousin, Jerusha Higginbotham, from Varmount.

Mrs. S. Is it possible!

Mr. S. We are happy to see you, Miss Higginbotham. [*Shakes hand.*]

Wom. So this is yer husband, is it? How de do, Benjamin? Slick-lookin' man, ain't he?

Mary. He is my father.

Wom. What! Marcy me! *This* ain't my little cousin Mary, is it? [*Advancing to Mrs. S.*] Wal, folks grow old as the years go on; but some folks show age more than others. [*Shakes hand.*]

Mary [*comes down, R. Aside.*] Oh, this is terrible! What shall we do?

Mrs. S. Take off your things, won't you?

Wom. No, I guess not. I've got to go down town and see about my trunk pretty quick. I left it in a grocery-store, for I didn't know whether Benjamin had a spare room or not.

Mr. S. Certainly, certainly. Let me send for your trunk.

Wom. There was a mighty slick-lookin' clerk in there; didn't know but he might be sweet on your darter. So I says to him, "Do you know Benjamin Shanklin's darter Mary?" Says I, "She must be big enough for sparkin' now," says I.

Mary. O mother!

Mrs. S. I don't think Mary knows the grocery clerk.

Wom. She don't! Now, I wonder at it. If there was sich a smart-lookin' feller a-clerkin' in our town, all the girls would be a-settin' caps for him. Have you got a beau, Mary? [*Crosses to Mary.*]

Mr. S. Ahem! Have you had any supper, Miss Higginbotham?

Mrs. S. Ah, yes! Pray, come down to the dining-room, Cousin Jerusha.

Wom. Laws-a-me! I ain't hungry! Why, I brought along a big basket of provisions, enough to lasted me

for a fortnight. Didn't know how long I should be a gettin' to New York; thought 't was 'bout as fur off as Eurip. There's a hull chicken I hain't teched, in that basket. I left it to the grocery-store. Told the man I didn't know how well off Benjamin Shanklin might be, but thought likely he'd be thankful enough for victuals to stop his young ones' mouths.

Mr. S. [*aside to Mrs. S.*] Good heavens! What shall we do with her?

Mrs. S. [*advancing to Wom.*] Won't you go up into the nursery, and see the children?

Wom. Massy sakes, no! I can't bear young ones.
[*Bell rings.*]

Mary. Oh, that is Augustine! What shall we do?

Wom. Hey? What did yer say? [*Enter Mr. Baker.*] Eh? Who's this a-comin'?

Mrs. S. Mr. Baker, Miss Higginbotham. [*Mr. B. bows.*]

Wom. Did ye say he was a baker? Why, he's dressed slicker 'n that feller in the grocery-store. You have some good-lookin' chaps in this town. Should think Mary 'd got married afore now. Set down on the soffy, mister. I want ter ask ye how they make baker's bread. That's something I always wanted ter know.

[*All sit, — Mr. B. and Wom. on sofa; Mr. and Mrs. S. at table; Mary, chair, R.*]

Mrs. S. You have made a slight mistake, Cousin Jerusha. This gentleman's name is Baker — Mr. Augustine Baker. He is studying for the bar.

Wom. Bar-tender! Want ter know! Well, I never should have thought it. Sorry to hear yer a

bar-tender, young man. Bar-tendin's a mighty low sort of business.

Mr. B. You are still laboring under a mistake. I am a lawyer.

Wom. A lawyer? Wuss 'n' wuss!

Mr. B. This is a very fine evening, Miss Mary.

Mary. Lovely. Does the band play in the Park?

Wom. [*sighs, and draws toward Mr. B.*] Oh! you do make me think so much of my old beau, Joseph Stiles. He war n't a harnsum man, and he had a wart on his nose, but he was a dretful good sort of a critter. Yer mother war n't a Stiles, was she? [*Moving up.*]

Mr. B. [*moving off haughtily*]. My mother was a Belknap.

Wom. Lor! Ye couldn't speak prouder if she was a bell-handle! Wal, I don't care whether she was a bell-mat or a door-mat, you're a real pretty feller. [*Edges closer.*] Joseph Stiles never looked so harnsum as you, even when he had on his good clothes. What store do you buy your clothes to, now? [*Edging nearer.*]

Mr. B. [*edging off*]. Miss Mary, would you like to walk in the Park?

Wom. Oh! don't go till I've given ye one kiss. [*Throws herself into Mr. B.'s arms.*] For Joseph's sake!

Mr. B. Thunder! Take the woman off! [*Rises abruptly, with woman clinging to him.*]

[*Mary screams, and runs off, R. Mr. and Mrs. S. try to unclasp woman's arms. In the scuffle, bonnet and false curls fall off, revealing Tom. Tom snatches off goggles, and laughs immoderately.*]

Mr. B. Tom, you scoundrel! [*Exit hurriedly, R.*]

Mr. S. Tom! You, sir! [*Marches Tom off by ear. Exeunt, L.*]

Mrs. S. O Tom! how could you? [*Exit, L.*]

[*N. B. — The spectacles used upon the stage should always have their glasses removed.*]

ZEKLE'S COURTSHIP.

CHARACTERS :

FIVE MALE ACTORS, AND FOUR FEMALE ACTORS.

Back of the stage there are two screens, forming the wall of Huldah's kitchen. On one of these are hung bright tins; upon the other is attached a wooden fire-frame and hearth, in which stand iron andirons, laid with skilfully-painted logs, behind which is concealed a small lamp, in red glass bowl. On the top of the fire-frame stands a bright kerosene lamp, and above it hangs, on the screen, a rusty musket, and a couple of crook-necked squashes. Upon this side is an entrance, with braided door-mat, and, near by, a chair for Zekle to play with when he "loiters on the mat." Across the room sits Huldah, in a simple, old-fashioned white gown. She is peeling apples out of a large tin pan upon the table, into an earthen bowl, held in her lap, one foot upon a stool; tallow candle on table. This play requires four assistants who do not act, and who must be thoroughly acquainted with their duties. Their positions, and the positions of all the actors, must be assigned before the curtain rises. There is a narrow curtain, which slides upon a rod at the side of the stage next Huldah, and behind her is the entrance into this room. Here stands Huldah's ma, "a-sprinklin' clothes agin to-morrer's i'nin'." Hair "pugged up" behind, short gown, skimp skirt; basket of clothes and tin basin on table before her, and in the basket the white crape shawl, and straw hat trimmed with huge white satin bows, which Huldah has on in the last tableau. In

the front grooves are two screens, representing outside of house. In one of these is a window, with turkey-red curtains, exactly opposite the kerosene lamp on fire-frame, which sends a bright light through the ruddy curtains; against the house a breadth of white cloth is "rucked" up, so as to look like drifted snow, and another breadth, laid smooth, represents a hard-beaten path. All the costumes used should be carefully copied from old plates, unless real antique suits can be obtained. A good reader delivers the poem in a slow and emphatic manner, carefully timing his rendition to the arrangement of the various tableaux. The curtain rises upon the outside of a farm-house on a moonlight night. Everything "white and still." Foot-lights turned down.

Reader.

God makes sech nights, all white an' still,
 Fur'z you kin look or listen ;
 Moonshine an' snow, on field an' hill,
 All silence, an' all glisten.

[Enter Zekle. Walks slowly across stage, and "peeks in thru the winder."]

Reader.

Zekle crep' up, quite unbeknown,
 An' peeked in thru the winder ;
 An' there sot Huldy, all alone,
 With no one nigh to hender.

TABLEAU I.

A fireplace filled the room's one side,
 With half a cord o' wood in,
 There war n't no stoves (till comfort died),
 To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles ou
 Toward the pootiest, bless her!

An' leatle fires danced all about
 'The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
 An' in among 'em rusted
 The old queen's-arm that Gran'ther Young
 Fetched back from Concord, busted.

The very room, cos she was in,
 Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
 An' she looked full ez rosy agin
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'T was kin' o' kingdom come to look
 On sech a blessed creetur,
 A dog-rose, blushin' by a brook,
 Ain't modester nor sweeter.

[*Zekle straightens, and clears his throat.*]

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
 Clean grit an' human natur' ;
 None could n't quicker pitch a ton,
 Nor dror a furrer straighter.

[*Zekle turns toward audience, throws back shoulders,
 and scratches back of head, pitching hat over eyes.*]

He 'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
 He'd squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em ;
 Fust this one, an' then that, by spells, —
 All is, he could n't love 'em.

But 'long o' her his veins 'ould run
 All crinkley. like curled maple.

[*Exit Zekle, whistling softly.*]

The side she breshed felt full o' the sun,
 Ez a south slope in April.

She thought no voice had sech a swing
 Ez his'n, in the choir ;
 My! when he made Old Hundred ring,
 She know'd the Lord was nigher.

[Two assistants draw cotton cloth off stage; two draw scenes open; Zekle removes kerosene lamp from fire-frame.]

An' she blushed scarlit, right in prayer,
 When her new meetin' bunnit
 Felt somehow, thru its crown, a pair
 O' blue eyes sot upon it.

TABLEAU II.

That night, I tell ye, she looked some !
 She seemed to 've gut a new soul,
 For she felt sartin sure he 'd come,
 Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it too,
 A-raspin on the scraper.

[Huldah looks off, and appears to listen.]

All ways to once her feelin's flew,
 Like sparks on burnt-up paper.

[Enter Zekle. There must be good pantomimic action through the following scene, illustrative of the text.]

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
 Some doubtful o' the sequel;
 His heart kep' goin' pity pat, —
 But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her chair a jerk,
 Ez tho' she wished him funder,
 An' on her apples kep' to work,
 Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my pa, I s'pose?"
 "Wal — no — I come dazignin' —"
 "To see my ma?"

[*Narrow curtain drawn aside, revealing*]:

TABLEAU III.

"She's sprinklin' clo'es,
Agin to-morrow's i'nin'."

[*Narrow curtain slipped back.*]

To say why gals acts so and so,
Or don't, would be presumin';
Mebby to mean Yes, and say No,
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t'other,
An' on which one he felt the wust,
He could n't a told ye nuther.

Says he, "I'd better call agin;"
Says she, "Think likely, mister;"
That last word pricked him like a pin,
An', — wal, he up an' kist her.

[*Having kissed her, Zekle draws chair up, sits, and lays arm across back of chair. Huldah looks down bashfully, biting finger. Enter Ma, stands with up-raised hands.*]

TABLEAU IV.

When ma, bimeby, upon 'em slips,
Huldah sot, pale ez ashes,
All kin' o' smiley 'round the lips,
An' teary 'round the lashes.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight fur all expressin',
Till mother see how matters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

CURTAIN.

TABLEAU VI.

[All stand. Minister "deacons out," two lines at a time, the following verse. Choir sing, while Zekle and Huldah are covered with confusion, and utterly unable to carry their parts.]

This is the way I long have sought,
And mourned because I found it not;
And now I'm in, I'll never stray,
But thank my stars I've found the way.

CURTAIN.

ELIZABETH CARISBROOKE WITH A "P."

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

ELIZABETH PLYMPTON CARISBROOKE (Miss Carisbrooke *with* a P.).

ELIZABETH CARISBROOKE (Cousin to Miss Carisbrooke *with* a P.).

MRS. CARISBROOKE GLUMM (Mother to Elizabeth *without* a P.).

BRIDGET.

SIR HAROLD PLYMPTON, BART. (engaged to Miss Carisbrooke *with* a P.).

HARRISON PLYMPTON (Younger Brother of Sir Harold).

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Miss Plympton Carisbrooke's parlor, elegantly furnished. Mrs. Glumm in bonnet and shawl, with bundles in lap, basket and umbrella by side, seated opposite Elizabeth Carisbrooke (without a P.), a handsome, showily dressed girl, who is resting her elbows on the table, her chin on her interlocked fingers, and looking intently at her mother.*

Mrs. G. Well, I don't know what 't is you're driving at, 'Lizabeth. I know I'm masterly proud to see my daughter dressed like a lady, and living among the big-bugs. As I said to Joe Smith (tailor), says I, — I went there to see 'f I could git a patch to mend my

old man's gray trouseys, and says I to Joe Smith (tailor), — Glumm alwiz wears gray trouseys that's hard to patch unless you can git jest the shade, and says I to J. Smith, says I, "It's a good thing when you've got a daughter that can't abide your second husband," — though Glumm's as good a man as ever Carisbrooke was, and a sight pootier —

E. Oh, mother!

Mrs. G. Well, what now? I say Glumm's a pooty man and forehanded —

E. No, but, mother, you did not canvass *me* at the tailor shop, did you?

Mrs. G. Law, no! I did n't know 't you wanted any canviss, or I'd 'a' done it. But as I said, ' Glumm's a pooty man, and what sets 'Elizabeth so dead against him I can't see. But 'tis a good thing, says I, that she's got a rich cousin that was willing to take her up when she forsook her —

E. Mother, is it possible that you spoke of my affairs so freely?

Mrs. G. Law, now! I did n't speak of one of your affairs. If there's anything I keep mum on it's *suitors*. I only jest said that 't was a good thing Elizabeth Carisbrooke *with* a P. in her name was your own cousin, and was willing to take you up when you forsook —

E. Mother, I must insist upon your not speaking about me in this way to Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Mrs. G. [*chuckling*]. Come, now, I did n't know 't you had so many. I hain't mentioned you to Tom nor Dick, and I don't know what Harry you mean, unless it's that Lord Harry who is engaged to Elizabeth Carisbrooke *with* a P. in her name.

E. Good heavens! Why will you keep throwing that P. in my teeth? Isn't it enough to occupy the position I do? — an unsalaried companion; a ladies' maid without wages; neither servant nor mistress! dressed and fed —

Mrs. G. Well, that now! I'm sure she dresses you well, and there's oysters!

E. What?

Mrs. G. Oysters, you know! And if there's any thing I do love it's oysters. But Glumm he's sorter stingy ef he is forehanded, and clams come cheaper'n oysters, for he can dig 'em himself —

E. Well, mother, if I had a cent in the world I would buy you all the oysters you wanted. But I have not one cent! not one cent! I'm a perfect beggar, living on the bounty of a cousin, born to greater fortune than I only because her mother had the good luck to have a titled and childless aunt, and the wit to name the only daughter after her.

Mrs. G. Well, now, 'Lizabeth, I did as well by you. Lady Elizabeth Plympton don't happen to be my aunt, so I couldn't very well put a Plympton into your name. But I did name you after the Elizabeth Carisbrooke who had the Plympton put into her name; and it's a good thing I did, for as I said to J. Smith (tailor) no longer ago than this morning, — I went down there to git a patch for Glumm's gray trouseys. Glumm, he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they are hard to patch unless you can git jest the shade, — and says I to Joe Smith, says I, "It's a good thing when you've got a daughter [*E. rises and walks about*] that can't abide your second husband," says I, — though as I said

before, Glumm's a pooty man, and forehandedder than ever Carisbrooke was, ef he is stingy in the matter of oysters, though that don't signify —

[Enter, R., Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, a dignified and graceful lady, simply though richly dressed in walking-costume.]

E. You took but a short walk, Miss Plympton. Will you go to your room, or shall I take your things?

Miss P. C. Wait a little, Cousin Elizabeth; I have some news to tell you. Good morning, Aunt Glumm. You are here early to-day. *[Pulls off gloves.]*

Mrs. G. Yes, I've jest been down to J. Smith's tailor shop to see ef I could git a patch to match my old man's gray trouseys. Glumm alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they're hard to match unless you can git jest the shade.

Miss P. C. Did you succeed in getting such a piece as you wanted?

Mrs. G. Well no: here's the trouseys *[unrolling bundle. Miss P. C. should stand a little back of Mrs. G., with hand on her chair]* and here's the patch *[showing cloth of entirely different color]*. It won't quite cover, but perhaps I can find something in the house to go with it. J. Smith give me this blue, but it don't look well.

Miss P. C. I think I have something that will match better, although not of the same material, — the remains of a discarded Boulevard skirt. Will it do you any good? *[Crosses over and sits.]*

Mrs. G. Lor, now, that's real clever of you!

Mrs. P. C. Elizabeth, will you please ring the bell?
[E. rings bell.]

Mrs. G. As I said to J. Smith (tailor) no longer ago than this morning, says I, "Ef you ain't born with a silver spoon in your mouth, it's a good thing to be connected with them that was." [*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. Was ye afther wantin' me, Miss Plympton?

Miss P. C. Take Mrs. Glumm up to the east closet, and see if I have any cast-off article of woollen goods that will match some cloth she has there. [*Speaks aside with E.*]

Mrs. G. That's real clever of you, now. [*Proceeds to roll up bundles.*] And as I said to J. Smith this morning [*to Bridget*],—I went down there, Bridget, to git a patch for my old man's gray trouseys. Glum alwiz wears gray trouseys—

E. For goodness' sake, mother, aren't you ever going to start?

Mrs. G. Yes, 'Lizabeth, soon's ever I've picked up my things. Here, Bridget, you hold my basket and umbril while I put up my specs, that's a good girl. It's a good thing to marry a man that's got rich relations, Bridget, especially ef he ain't forehanded, as Carisbrooke wa'n't. As I was saying to J. Smith (tailor) this morning, says I, a speaking of 'Lizabeth, "It's a good thing when you have a daughter that can't abide your second husband—"

E. Gracious man! Mother, will you ever go and get that cloth?

Mrs. G. It's a petticoat, Bridget, that matches my old man's gray trouseys. Glumm, he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they are hard to patch ef you don't have jest the right shade.

Miss P. C. [*rises and comes down*]. Elizabeth tells

me you are fond of oysters. I will send you some for dinner if you will be so kind as to accept them.

Mrs. G. Well, now, that's clever of you, for Glumm he's sorter stingy about oysters, if he is forehanded. But you see clams come cheaper, 'cause he can dig 'em himself. Howsumever, that don't signify —

Bridget [*yawning prodigiously*]. Will, thin, if this ould leddy is n't enough to thry the patience of the apostles and blissid Vargin, let alone the saints. Will ye come along, mum?

Mrs. G. Glumm's a mighty pooty man, Bridget, forehandeder [*drops bundle and picks it up*] — forehandeder than ever Carisbrooke [*drops umbrella, picks it up*] — than ever Carisbrooke was, Bridget.

B. Give me them things back, mum. There, now! If ye'll be plazed to proceed wid yer progress. Give me that bundle, too —

Mrs. G. Them's my old man's gray trouseys, Bridget. Glumm he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they're hard to patch if you don't have jest the right shade. I went down to J. Smith's (tailor's) — [*Exit, L., preceded by Bridget. Voice is heard continuing.*]

E. She's off at last, thank goodness! And now, Miss Plympton, if you will lay off your things before you talk, I think you will feel better. [*Comes down to Miss P. C., who stands R. front.*] Here is a fan, and let me fetch you a glass of water. You look faint from your walk.

Miss P. C. [*crossing to chair, L., stands*]. No, Cousin Elizabeth. I am only excited with the news I have received. Here is a letter from Lady Elizabeth Plympton, announcing that Lord Harry — her nephew,

to whom I was engaged in babyhood — is already on his way to claim his bride. He will be here in ten days.

E. O Cousin Elizabeth! O Miss Plympton! And you will be a lady, then! Lady Elizabeth Plympton Carisbrooke Plympton! Oh, dear, how will you feel? Will you live in England?

Miss P. C. Yes, some of the time. But I am so attached to my old home that I shall never abandon Carisbrooke House. I shall be here a large part of the time, Elizabeth, and you may keep the house and play mistress in my absence.

E. [*aside*]. Of course! Here I must stick while she is presented at St. James's and travels on the Continent. All for not having a P. in my name.

Miss P. C. Here is the young baronet's photograph. It does not bear much resemblance to those I have before received.

E. [*taking card*]. Oh, yes, ma'am! His hair is combed precisely the same. His whiskers are grown longer, that's all the difference.

Miss P. C. Perhaps so, yet it does not seem like the same face to me. There was something frank, open, and candid in Lord Harry's look that was very winning. I miss it here. This is not a good face, Cousin Elizabeth. I almost dread my future. [*Goes up to table and examines album.*]

E. Oh, indeed, Miss Plympton, it does not become you to say so. Forgive my saying it, — you know we are cousins, — but it seems to me that you ought to be so grateful for the great honor conferred upon you, that you would be ashamed to pick flaws in the young baronet.

Miss P. C. [*looking up from album*]. Because he is a baronet, my good cousin? Indeed, I do not feel that I am receiving any great honor. [*Comes down.*] Although he bears a title, you know the fortune is mine, and it is only to secure it in the English branch of the Plympton family that Sir Harold takes an American bride.

E. Oh, I never understood it so! I thought it merely a freak of the Dowager Lady Plympton, who left you her money and married you to her orphan nephew because you were named after her.

Miss P. C. No. The property came to my mother from the Wilbournes, rich Liverpool merchants. In order to secure a fortune to the eldest son of her penniless brother-in-law (who succeeded to the title upon the death of her husband, the old baronet), my great-aunt, Elizabeth Wilbourne, Dowager Lady Flympton, asked my mother to name her daughter Elizabeth Plympton, and betroth her to the young baronet, then in his cradle; thus securing to *his* children all the Wilbourne property which was inherited by my grandfather and great-aunt Elizabeth, all of which is *my own*, and would be mine though I refused to marry this penniless lord, whose looks, I must say, do not please me.

E. But oh, the title! I would give a fortune willingly, if I possessed it, to be a lady and presented at court.

Miss P. C. I do not covet the distinction; but I will not break the engagement, even if I could, for so paltry a reason, — that my lover's face is less handsome than it used to be.

[*Sighs, and going over to chair, L., sits. E. leans*

on back of chair, examining photograph, which Miss P. C. holds in her hand.]

E. How can you say that? I think he is just splendid, — the dashing sort of fellow i like.

Miss P. C. 'T is a pity we could not change places, cousin. But really, I dread this meeting. I think I must run away up to Grandmother Carisbrooke's Vermont farm, wade in the mountain streams, pick huckleberries, make hay, drive home the cows, — anything, everything, to forget the dreadful fate that seems closing around me. I will have nine days of pure enjoyment; on the tenth, don silk and velvet, and receive Sir Harold with all the dignity which becomes a future baroness. [*Rises.*] Meanwhile, Elizabeth, I shall expect you to oversee the preparations for his reception. See that the house is in order, the wine-cellar filled (from his looks I judge that to be important), and enough baked meats on hand to satisfy his English appetite. [*Exit, R.*]

E. Of course! Nothing but work, work, for Elizabeth Carisbrooke *without* the P. I suppose she'll pay me in her cast-off duds. Wonder if she'll leave her Cashmere shawl when she goes to England?

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Same. Curtain rises. Enter, R., Bridget, preceded by Harrison Plympton.*

B. Is it Miss Elizabeth ye was wantin', sir?

H. P. Miss Elizabeth Carisbrooke. Here is my card.

[*B. wipes her hands on her apron, takes the card, looks at it first one side up, then the other, finally speaks.*]

B. Wal, I s'pose ye're another of her fellers.
[*Exit, L.*]

H. P. [*laying hat and gloves on table*]. Really, now, for a specimen of perfect *naïveté*, recommend me to an American serving-maid. [*Sits in chair, R. of table, tipping back and putting thumbs in waistcoat pockets.*] Quite a well-furnished house, this. A pretty landed estate, too. Miss Carisbrooke must have a snug little property of her own, even if Aunt Elizabeth should cut off the entail, though I don't think that can be done. As I understood the will at the recorder's office, in default of issue on the part of either John Wilbourne or Elizabeth, the property all goes to the child or children of the other, without if or therefore. A pretty little spec. Miss Carisbrooke heirs.

[*Enter E., L., very elegantly dressed.*]

E. Sir Harold Plympton, I understand. [*Curtseys deeply.*]

H. P. [*rises, makes flourishing bow*]. The same. Cousin Elizabeth. [*E. starts.*] I presume I may call you Cousin Elizabeth without offence, and I beg that

you will lay aside all ceremony, and just call me Harry, as is, I suppose, according to your American usage.

E. Indeed, sir — Lord Harry —

H. P. Nay, now, my sweet cousin, if I must insist, lord me no lords. I am to you only Harry Plympton, your obedient — [*Kisses her hand. E. snatches it away.*]

E. Sir, you are mistaken.

H. P. What the devil! *Pardonnez-moi!* Ah — that is — pardon me. Probably the vulgar English is more acceptable to American ears than the soft *Parisienne*, because more easily understood. And understand this also, *ma chère*, that prudery is all lost on me. Your coy, Puritanic ways may be thought pretty enough between betrothed Yankee lovers; but be aware, Miss Prim, that I claim not merely a right to kiss your hand, but your lips also! [*Passes arm around waist.*]

E. No, but really — [*H. P. kisses her.*] Oh-h! [*Sinks into chair, covers face.*]

H. P. Deuce take it! what a prude! Elizabeth, this is going too far. Such childish affectation may suit a juvenile game at forfeits, but I came here expecting to find a bride ready and waiting, with her veil in the box, and orange flowers ordered.

E. What! so soon?

H. P. Yes, so soon. Jove! when a girl has been engaged twenty-five years, she ought to be ready to be married, I think.

E. [*bridling*]. I am not twenty-five, sir!

E. Oh, well, I know you are not. That was a slight stretch. But really, Elizabeth, I want this thing settled. Can't we be married to-night?

E. Impossible!

H. P. Why impossible?

E. Why, she has n't *thought* of the wedding-dress!

H. P. Probably not. You have kept her at work on the thousand and one small mysteries of the toilet, that we masculine minds cannot comprehend the use or the need of. But how long will it take you to be measured for a wedding-gown? And if one seamstress is not enough, call in a dozen. I'll trow the stuff is ordered!

E. Indeed, sir, you don't understand the situation. Let me explain it.

H. P. Explain the devil! I tell you we must be married in two days' time.

E. Mercy! I must telegraph to Vermont.

H. P. Telegraph to China for aught I care!

E. You know, sir, that you have come sooner than we expected you —

H. P. I understand that, — and have put you rather about in your preparations. I understand, and will take things as they are. Since I find so beautiful a Hebe [*bows with hand on heart*] in the person of my promised bride, I can put up with small commons and slack attendance.

E. O Sir Harold! If it is I whom you mean by Hebe —

H. P. Whom else should I mean? But I beg that you will not call me Sir Harold again. It is a name I utterly loathe and abhor! I tell you I am Harry, only Harry to you, *ma chère*.

E. I wonder at you, my lord.

H. P. "My lord," again. Is the title so dainty to a

Yankee tongue that one must needs keep it, like a sweet morsel, forever in her mouth?

E. I will call you "Harry" simply, since you command it, but "Lord Harry" seems so much more natural to me.

H. P. Yes, yes, that's to be expected; but do not give so harsh a word as "*command*" to a lover's wish. [*Tries to kiss her.*]

E. Oh, indeed you must not!

H. P. Oh, but indeed I will! [*Kisses her.*] And more! I'll make you give me a kiss yourself, Miss Prude, as you ought in all conscience to have done long ago.

E. [*aside*]. Oh, this is too delicious!

H. P. Now, do you not want to know just what I thought of my prospective bride, from the pictures that have crossed the water and the prim little letters she has sent me?

E. Yes, certainly.

H. P. And do you not want to know what I think of you now, as I see and speak with you, face to face, and no longer as a shadowy presentiment?

E. Yes, indeed I do!

H. P. Well, promise that you'll marry me to-morrow night and I'll tell you the first; give me a kiss and I'll tell you the second.

E. Truly, truly, I cannot!

H. P. [*mutters an oath to himself; then aloud and with affected pleasantry*]. What a very impracticable little person it is! She has only two words in her vocabulary, "impossible" and "cannot." Now, my dainty dear, it will be well enough for you to use those

words after you have got the noose around my neck, and the halter well in hand ; but just at present I *must* have my own way.

E. But why? I can see no reason for such ridiculous haste.

H. P. Fair Minerva! Goddess of Wisdom! listen to my most resistless reasons. You have already remarked that I am come here three days earlier than you expected, but you have not asked the cause.

E. I thought the steamer got in sooner than you expected.

H. P. Sooner than *you* expected, you mean. The steamer on which Lord Harold should sail, as you supposed, and on which he *had* engaged passage at the time Lady Elizabeth's letter was written, is due next Friday.

E. Well, but for mercy's sake, how did you get here, then? Did you come by cable?

H. P. Scarcely! but by another line of steamships which sail from Plymouth alternately with the Liverpool line. I presume you will perceive there must have been some overpowering reason why I should have made the journey to Plymouth, and taken one of those small and inconvenient steamers, when a passage had already been secured and paid for on the large and elegant Liverpool boat, for the slight advantage of three days' time.

E. Indeed I do not see what could be the great necessity.

H. P. Simply this: Lady Elizabeth is lying low with a sudden attack of congestion. Unless I can send her a cable despatch announcing my marriage before she breathes her last, she cuts off the entail.

E. Oh, my gracious! what shall I do?

H. P. [*mockingly*]. What shall I do? Marry me off-hand, fair Miss Dives, and so secure the handsome property to yours devotedly.

E. Oh, if I only dared!

H. P. Dared? Is it, then, so very dangerous and dreadful a proceeding to win a coronet to that graceful head?

E. A coronet? No, no. [*Walking about.*] Lady Elizabeth Plympton! That sounds very nice, doesn't it?

H. P. Oh, very! I am surprised, astonished, that America, which affects to hold rank and title in absolute contempt, should have a daughter who appears to regard both so highly.

E. Oh, I would rather be a titled lady, with my noble hall and retinue of servants, court balls, hunting in the highlands, travels on the Continent in my own yacht—ah! [*laughs*] I did not mean that, exactly, but it must be glorious!

H. P. [*uneasily*]. "Kind hearts are more than coronets," fair coz.

E. [*hastily*]. Yes, I know. "And simple faith than Norman blood." [*Aside, walking about.*] Simple faith? But she does not care anything for this baronet, and I care so much! She would break faith with him if she could. She wished I might change places with her. [*Aloud, approaching close to H. P.*] You have not told me what you think of me.

H. P. Nay, fair lady, you were to give me a kiss for that.

E. [*coily*]. Oh, yes! Well, and what you thought

of—of Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, from her letters you know.

H. P. I did not like her so well as I do now, that's a fact!

E. What? Sir!

H. P. Aha! that shocks you? Well, to tell the truth, I thought you a rather colorless young Puritan; but *now*—see here, you are to marry me to-morrow night for that, you know.

E. What, I?

H. P. Of course. Who else?

E. [*coming to front of stage, aside*]. If I only dared! He is so splendid! And it is his own fault; he will not let me explain, nor take no for an answer.

H. P. [*coming behind her*]. Shall I tell you what I think of this delicious morsel of flesh and blood, which puts her pale photograph to shame?

E. [*moving away from him*]. Do you really fancy me?

H. P. Fancy! That is a weak word. Your own fair face would be fortune enough for any maid, without the filthy lucre that, after all, makes but a paltry setting for such a jewel!

E. Oh, yes, it sounds well for you to say that, who are only seeking me for my money. [*Aside.*] For the money he thinks I have.

H. P. Nay, sweetheart, I would wed thee on the instant, an thou saidst the word, wert thou as penniless as King Cophetua's beggar-maid. [*Takes her hand.*]

E. [*snatching it away*]. You do not mean it!

H. P. [*slipping arm about waist*]. What! does

that surprise my ladyship so? Then she has but a poor mirror. Give me a kiss for my opinion, *ma belle*.

[*E. joins her hands, and kissing the knuckles, touches them to his lips, then runs off, R.*]

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE. — *Same. Harrison Plympton, in bridal dress, pacing the room in great agitation.*

H. P. [*looking at watch*]. How long she delays! Deuce take it! She said she was ready an hour ago. A woman would stop to match her ribbons and the train at the station, I do believe. Jove! if I can only get the fortune secured, my lady may take her own time. Precious little will she see of me after I get the knot tied so it can't slip. [*Enter Miss P. C., R., in plain travelling-dress.*] Aha! what Puritan Abigail have we here?

Miss P. C. Good evening, sir.

H. P. Good evening, my blooming lass. All the better evening since you have come to help me while away the time. [*Yawns in her face.*]

[*Miss P. C. rings the bell, and proceeds to lay aside hat and shawl.*]

H. P. What, a dumb belle, upon my word! But I prefer a bell with a clapper. I would n't try to ring one without a tongue. Ha! ha! a pretty good joke for a man on the eve of matrimony, is n't it? On the very eve of making a marriage belle, I might say. Ha! ha!

How one can *ring the changes* on a belle ! Pretty good pun. Ha ! ha !

[*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. Och, miss, it's yersilf got home ! Shall I call Miss Elizabeth.

Miss P. C. No, Bridget, but please inform me who this person may be.

B. Och, miss, if ye plazes, that's the barrynit, Misther Sir Harold Plympton, sure.

Miss P. C. Sir Harold !

H. P. [*with a flourish*]. Sir Harold, if you choose to call me so ; though from lips as soft as thine, Harry would be the sweeter name, methinks.

B. Will ye be wantin' a cup of tay, miss ?

Miss P. C. No, my good girl. You may go now. [*Sits and leans head on hand.*]

B. Faith, me leddy'll be given the barrynit his walkin' ticket, I'm thinkin' ; and good riddance bad rubbage, says I. [*Exit, R.*]

H. P. Really, fair Abigail, you seem to be more overpowered by the weight of my enormous title than any one I have yet met at Carisbrooke House. If it's because you're not dressed up —

Miss P. C. Excuse me, sir. I wish to be alone.

H. P. Upon my honor, now ! If that is n't about the coolest thing out ! I should think it had been iced, madam ; upon my word I should. However, I take the hint so delicately conveyed, and my *conge* at the same instant ; the more willingly as [*looking from window*]—

I see a hand you cannot see that beckons me away ;
I hear a voice you cannot hear that bids me not to stay

Adieu, most unkind Abigail, adieu. [*Exit, kissing hand, L.*]

[*Miss P. C. rises, and walks several times across room.*] This Harold! This my little Lord Harry, the hero of my childhood's romances? It is not possible! How could this brainless profligate write such letters, so tender, yet so sensible and deferential! Yes, the pictured face did not deceive me; he has certainly changed. [*Sits by table and examines album.*] I cannot bind myself to that man to be his slave, bought by a title! No, not to keep my sacred promise will I bow to such a yoke! [*Rises.*] Oh, it was a sinful thing to fetter us in our cradles, to chain my living soul to the dead body of this man — man? No, beast! I will not bear my chain! [*Putting hand to throat.*] It is too heavy! It galls me!

[*Miss P. C. walks about room. Enter Sir Harold in travelling dress, followed by Bridget, R.*]

B. A jintleman to see ye, Miss Plympton, if ye plazes. Shall I be afther makin' some tay for him?

Miss P. C. Yes, Bridget, and I will take some refreshment now, also. I feel worn and faint with my journey.

B. Dade, mum, and ye look fur orl the wurrld loike a ghost. Shall I be afther shpakin' til Miss Elizabeth?

Miss P. C. Not now; I think she is entertaining — that — gentleman, and I would not have them disturbed. You may go now. [*Exit B., L.*] Please be seated, sir; I had not observed that you were standing all this while. [*Sir H. bows and presents card. Miss P. C. reads with a scornful smile and returns it. Speaks coldly.*]

Miss P. C. I presume I do not read this correctly.

Sir H. Madam! I beg your pardon! I am Sir Harold Plympton.

Miss P. C. [*bowing*]. So your card states.

Sir H. Then may I ask the cause of my very ungracious reception?

Miss P. C. Whatever the game you are endeavoring to play, you have unfortunately made your move too late, and will find yourself checkmated. The original Lord Harold is already in the field, and I must say he is not so attractive as to render a duplicate desirable. [*Goes down to table and sits.*]

Sir H. Madam, this is impossible!

Miss P. C. [*taking card from basket*]. Here is his card, of which yours seems to be a fac-simile.

Sir H. Am I speaking to Miss Elizabeth Plympton Carisbrooke, the betrothed of Sir Harold Plympton?

Miss P. C. You are. Will you please to be seated? [*Leans on hands and covers face as if overcome with her feelings.*]

Sir H. Miss Plympton, some dreadful imposition has been played upon you. Who it is that has palmed himself off for Sir Harold, I am totally at a loss to conceive; but I think I can establish my identity. Did you not receive Lady Elizabeth's letter of the 11th, announcing my expected arrival in the "Europa" to-day?

Miss P. C. I did.

Sir H. And it contained my *carte de visite*?

Miss P. C. It did.

Sir H. Will you tell me whether the picture resembles me or not?

Miss P. C. It does not.

Sir H. Elizabeth!

Miss P. C. [*opening album*]. If you have any idea of your own features, you must perceive that the veriest child could not be deceived as to your non-identity with the person who sat for that.

Sir H. That? Is that the picture you received in the letter?

Miss P. C. It is.

Sir H. But that is not me at all. That is my brother, Harrison.

Miss P. C. I wish that I could believe you.

Sir H. But you must believe me. Where is the renegade? You say that he was here, in America.

Miss P. C. He is, and in this house. [*Rings bell.*]

Sir H. Well, this is a great mystery! I supposed him in Brighton.

Enter B. Yis mum, the table's all ready, and the tay dhrawin' beauthiful. Kitty was jest brilin' a bit o' steak, if it 'ud plaze ye.

Miss P. C. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, my good girl. And will you go now and ask Miss Elizabeth and Lord Harry to come here?

B. I wull, mum. [*Exit.*]

Sir H. I am at a loss to conceive how Harrison could have got over here in this time, nor do I see his purpose in attempting such a mad masquerade. I gave him Aunt Elizabeth's letter to post on the day he left for Brighton. He knew the contents, and that I was expecting to follow it on the next steamer. He certainly could not have expected to marry you and secure the property before my arrival.

Miss P. C. I should think not. At least, he has made no such attempt. Indeed, I have scarcely spoken with him.

Sir H. Really, this is unaccountable!

[*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. If it plazes ye, mum, I've hunted the mouse over from garret til cellar, and out intil the garding, and I can't find hair nor hide of 'em.

Miss C. P. They have probably gone out walking. Elizabeth was ever fond of a title.

B. Ye need n't be botherin' yersilf ter wait fur thim same, mum, for they hed their tay more 'n a nour ago.
[*Exit, B., L.*]

Miss P. C. [*looking from window*]. There they come! They have been out driving. Will you tell me whether you recognize that man?

Sir H. My brother Harrison, by all that's miraculous! If it's not, I'll sell my eyes for old iron.

[*Enter E. and H. P., L. Stop short in surprise.*]

Sir H. [*rising*]. How now, Harrison?

H. P. [*with a flourish*]. Happy to meet you in America, Sir Harold. Permit me to introduce to you the lovely Mrs. Elizabeth Carisbrooke Plympton. Ha, ha! Pretty dodge, was n't it?

E. Sir Harold!

Miss P. C. Mrs. Plympton!

Sir H. I do not comprehend what dodge you have played, Harrison.

H. P. You don't? Can't comprehend it yet, can you? Sort of dazzling to come suddenly upon a fellow after twenty years of wooing. Ha, ha, ha! Forgive my hilarity! I forget you don't understand the

joke. Listen, *mon cher frère*, the elder brother, Sir Harold Plympton, Baronet. Ha, ha, ha! Broad lands are more than coronets, and bank accounts than Norman blood! Don't see the point yet? Upon my soul, I see I must explain! When our lady aunt gave me the letter to mail to the fair Elizabeth, the devil entered into me, and he said, "Harry, my boy, why should this elder brother of thine bear away both title and gold? Methinks this is an unequal division. Can't you equalize it?" "I'm with you there, old fellow," says I. "Give me a lift towards my lady's gold, and I'll see that 't is spent in your service." So, my most noble Lord Harry, to make a long story short, I opened the letter, and having made sure of the time at which you would be expected in America, substituted my own handsome visage for that Knight of the Rueful Countenance enclosed therein, as a precautionary measure, to make my welcome more assured. A mistake in identity might have worked disastrously to my interests. Took a night train to Plymouth, engaged a passage on the first steamer out, and behold the result! Mrs. Elizabeth Carisbrooke, at your service. [*Takes E. by the hand, and drawing her forward, bows with hand on heart. Miss P. C. turns to L., sits.*]

E. And you are not Sir Harold? You are not a baronet?

H. P. Nary a baronet. Not until my elder brother dies, fair charmer! Let us pray that his life may be short, since nothing less than a coronet will satisfy you.

E. Yes, but you were married under your brother's name. It was not legal!

H. P. Begging your pardon, I was married under the name of Harry Plympton, which is as much my own as his.

E. But you have deceived me cruelly! You are a shameless impostor! [*Sobs.*]

H. P. Don't call your husband names, pretty one! It is n't becoming. Besides, my dear, it only aggravates the marriage bond. We are married, you know, my duck, until death do us part, and all that sort of thing. Come, make the best of the inevitable!

Sir H. Harrison, there is one grave error that you have committed in your calculations.

H. P. Ah? Enlighten me, if you please. Lady Plympton can't cut off the entail. I made sure of that before coming.

Sir H. The error which you have committed is in marrying the Elizabeth Carisbrooke *without* a P.

H. P. I beg your pardon —

Sir H. There are two Elizabeth Carisbrookes, one is an heiress, the other is not. Elizabeth *Plympton* Carisbrooke, the heiress, sits there. Elizabeth Carisbrooke, *minus* the P., minus also any landed property, is the present Mrs. Harrison Plympton. Do *you* understand now?

H. P. The devil!

Sir H. You are right in ascribing the fault to him. He is not a very safe adviser.

H. P. Deuce take it! Girl! do you mean to say that you have deceived me into marriage with a beggar?

E. [*angrily*]. You deceived yourself, sir! You would not let me explain who I was. You cursed me when I attempted it, and forced me to marry you

against my will. You said [*sobbing*] that you were not wooing me for my money, but would marry me though I were as poor as King Cophetua's beggar-maid.

H. P. Hell and furies! You could have explained had you chosen!

Sir H. Come, come, my dear brother, you are married, you know, till death does you part, and all that sort of thing. Such scenes only aggravate the marriage bond. Make the best of the inevitable, Harrison.

H. P. Elizabeth, have n't you a pound in the world?

E. [*bitterly*]. Not a penny! Not until my cousin Elizabeth dies. Let us pray that her life will be a short one, since nothing but gold will satisfy you! Forgive me, dear Miss Plympton, but I am so unhappy! [*Flings herself down at Miss P. C.'s feet, and burying face in her lap, sobs bitterly.*]

H. P. [*crossing over*]. Come, come, this won't do, my beauty. For you are a beauty, and I have to thank my blessed stars for giving me a charming witch instead of the old hag I deserved; for I would have married you had you been blind of one eye and ugly as sin. Sin is somewhat ugly, is n't it, my poor jewel? What we are to do with ourselves to-night I don't know. [*Walking up and down.*] I actually have not a shilling; no, not a farthing with which to pay for a night's lodging! And there is to-morrow coming, and next week, and the week after! Have you got any jewels you can pawn, my angel? [*Pausing suddenly before Miss P. C. and E.*]

Miss P. C. Stay! I shall not turn you out into the cold world to-night Nor will I let my cousin leave

Carisbrooke House dowerless. In fact, she shall not leave at all if you [*rises*] are willing to undertake the care of my American estate. [*H. P. bows.*] I had, before this, asked Elizabeth to keep the house during the time I spend in England.

H. P. Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, you make me your eternal debtor.

Miss P. C. Not at all. I am so grateful to Elizabeth for marrying you off my hands, and saving me a fate worse than death, that I would willingly dower her with half my fortune. [*Crosses to Sir H. and slips hand in his.*] And now you will arrange your toilets, while I ascertain if there is cake and wine in the house sufficient to set a decent wedding-table.

TABLEAU. — *Miss P. C. and Sir H. with hands joined, R. ; H. P., L. C., with arms folded, looking gloomily upon E., who kneels with head in chair, L.*

Curtain.

THE DON'S STRATAGEM.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

DAME McALLISTAIR.

KIMMER (neighbor) FEANNIE.

ALISON McALLISTAIR, daughter to Dame McAllistair.

DAVIE McALLISTAIR, cousin to Alison.

KATE CAMERON, a brunette, cousin to Alison.

DON LUIS CAMPEADOR, a Spanish soldier. •

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Interior of Scotch cottage. Table and chair, RIGHT FRONT ; spinning-wheel and chair, LEFT BACK ; closet, LEFT. Dame McAllistair alone.*

Dame. It's blithe I'll be the day that sets on Alison a married wife. It's nocht but rin, rin, Davie here and Davie there, frae the morn til the night. Night, did ye say, Dame McAllistair? Plague on the night, it's waur than the day ; they are over the mountains like foxes and the like, sae soon as the sun sets, and a claverin' like goshawks. There, it's like she's comin' noo, the hizzy ! [*Enter Kimmer Feannie, R.*] Ye're hame early the day, young one.

Kimmer. Hey?

Dame. God preserve's, — it's Kimmer Feannie ! What's the news, kimmer?

Kimmer. Happen Gossip Aileen's in her last sickness, God be thankit! [*Sits.*]

Dame. Weel, aweel, greetin's vain. We maun be resigned.

Kimmer. Jeannie Morrison was cried in kirk last Lord's day.

Dame. Jeannie Morrison! And what gars the flip-pant kite marryin' sae young, and she her mither's only bairn! Gude riddance til her! The mither maun be thankful to get the lazy jaud off her hands, but preserve the man that's gotten her! though I did think ane while 't would be my sister's ane chiel, Willie. He's weel saved a waur fate.

Kimmer. And what'll ye say but 'tis Willie, dame?

Dame. How say ye! Willie McAllistair?

Kimmer. Willie it is, dame. But we maun be resigned, ye ken. Greetin's vain.

Dame. It's a true word ye speak, kimmer, and I'll e'en try to be resigned. Happen Jeannie'll stiddy doon after marriage, and it's nae that small a tocher she'll bring Willie; wi' a stirk or twa and ousen and kye, and happen a placket o' siller forbye. Jeannie was always bonnie, ye mind, Feannie?

Kimmer. Aye, bonnie to them as takes siller for sense.

Dame. I dinna ken what was yere last word, kimmer; but I'll be fain when the truce is o'er, and Davie gaen back til his regiment again. The girl Alison is clean daft whenever he's about, and not worth a doit to her wark.

Kimmer. Ou, aye! What did ye say about the truce?

Dame. I say I wad the truce was over, and Davie back til his regiment, that I might get a lift frae Alison at my wark.

Kimmer. It's like, then, ye hae heard the news?

Dame. What news? Did na I speir at ye and speir at ye, and a' the news I got was of a doited auld woman's ails, and twa feckless chieles' matrimonial intentions, — weel, Jeannie Morrison's na to be sneezed at. Willie might hae gane farther and fared waur.

Kimmer [*rising*]. Weel, ye'll doubtless hear the gret news afore night.

Dame. What news, Kimmer Feannie? Have n't I speired at ye baith high and low? Ane might as weel speir at a dimmock. Ane thing I ken, — it's gude news, ye're so long a tellin' it. Ill news wad 'a' spoiled in yer mouth.

Kimmer. Gude or bad, it's just as ane takes it. But the truce will never be over, for the war's over instead.

Dame [*sinking into a chair and throwing up her hands*]. The war over, did ye say, and Davie on my hands for good?

Kimmer. The war's dune, I say. We hae e'en made it up wi' the King o' Spain, and gin he's satisfied ye ought to be. The toon is joost full o' Spanish men, wi' their big black een a winkin' at the lassies.

Dame. And ye stand there in yere auld shoon, a tellin' me o' the black een o' Spanish men! Oh, help us a'! What shall I do wi' the twa loons on my han's? Whisht! there comes Alison. Dinna ye speak a word o' it til her. [*Enter Alison, R.*] Where hae ye been, chiel?

Alis. [*crossing over and looking out at door, L.*].
Pullin' turnips, mother.

Kimmer. Weel, as I was a sayin' but noo, there's
a fair chance to-day for a smart lass to get a braw
Spanish lover, gin she —

Dame. Was it the kale ye was speakin' of, kimmer?
Gin ye'll step out the door, I'll gie ye a head or twa
for dinner. [*Exit, R.*]

Kimmer. I dinna mind, if it's a' the same til ye.
[*Exit, R.*]

Alis. [*turning about*]. Mother!

Dame [*returning*]. What is it, daughter?

Alis. I hear that King George has made it up with
Spain.

Dame. Ou, aye, I hae heard it too, daughter.

Alis. And the war's over, mother.

Dame. H'm! That follows in course, chiel.

Alis. And Davie's home for good.

Dame. Ay, Alison, sae it seems.

Alis. Is it all true, think ye, mother?

Dame. That I canna tell. The proof o' the puddin'
is eatin' the bag, they say. But Feannie'll be pullin'
the kale sprouts for hersel'! [*Exit, R.*]

[*Alis. seats herself at wheel and sings* (TUNE.
"There's nae luck about the house"): —]

And are ye sure the news is true?

And are ye sure he's weel?

Is this a time to think o' wark?

Can I sit at my wheel?

[*Walks to front of stage; sings: —*]

And will I see his face again?

And will I hear him speak?

I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought;
In truth, I'm like to greet.

[*Enter Davie, R.*]

Davie. Allie, Allie, sweetheart!

Alis. [*confusedly, looking over shoulder*]. Oh, is that you, Cousin Davie?

Davie. Cousin Davie! Ou, aye, it's me, and it's yere cousin Davie. [*Alison turns away, tossing her head.*] The war's over, Alison.

Alis. That news is eight-and-forty hours old.

Davie. Aweel?

Alis. And where have you been since yester morn?

Davie [*approaching*]. That can a' be explained, lass.

Alis. You need not take the trouble.

Davie. Why, Allie, girl, I could na get away all at once.

Alis. And the town has been full of Spanish men these twelve hours. Why could not you get away as well as the Spanish men?

Davie [*sulkily*]. I tauld ye I could na. Gin ye will na believe me, I'd best say nae mair. Ye might na believe my explanation.

Alis. Explanation, indeed! I doubt not Kate Cameron heard the news lang syne.

Davie. And what's that to me?

Alis. I do not ken myself! [*Walking up to him saucily.*] What is Kate Cameron to you, Davie? You ken best yourself.

Davie [*angrily*]. I dinna ken Kate Cameron frae a pickled herring!

Alis. Don't lie, Davie. You once knew Black Kitty of Calloch Frith well enough.

Davie. Oh, Kitty o' the Frith? Aye, but that was lang syne.

Alis. But you do remember her now, Davie? A bonnie lang lass. You used to say she was bonnier than me.

Davie. Vera like. Ye mind she has twa black een. I always doted on black een.

Alis. I thought you did not ken Kate C'ameron from a pickled herring.

Davie [*angrily*]. I hae na seen Black Kitty these sax years, and ye're a fule!

Alis. [*gravely*]. You have not seen Black Kitty these six years, and the ships anchored side by side in Calloch Frith these eight-and-forty hours? And dinner on the ships and in the town, and all the braw lassies in their gay ribbons waiting on the soldier lads —

Davie. Fie, Alison! I had clean forgot that Kate Cameron lived at Calloch Frith.

Alis. Perhaps I'll believe that some day. [*Exit, L.*]

Davie. Plague take the girl! I canna make out what she's aiming at. Kitty C'ameron! Why, now that I think o' 't, I do remember her vera weel. A blithe, black-eyed lass who used to be visiting here and called Alison cousin. Bonnier than Alison she was, in good faith; and I'm much mistaken if she was na the black-eyed wench I threw kisses at on the house-top to-day as we marched through Calloch Gate. But Allie's a fool to be doubting me. Hae na I held to her through peace and war, time and chance, sin' we were toddlin' bairns? I, that could hae the pick o' the lassies baith at home and abroad! There's mony a red-cheeked English damsel that smiled kindly on the

braw Highland lad. For I *am* a braw callant, and nae that badly off for a sweetheart that I need flech and pray at the heels of a sulky jaud.

[*Smirks at the glass, L., and s'a'ks up and down stage. Enter Kate, R., with basket on arm. Stops, looking at Davie.*]

Kate [*aside*]. Faith, but that's a handsome lad! I'll be bound he makes the girls' hearts jigget. [*Advances to table, R., sets down basket.*]

Davie [*turns around. Aside*]. Ye gods of war and love! Here is a black-eyed lass to set off Alison's Kitty Cameron with. Wow! but I'll gie her a reason for jealousy now. Good e'en, bonnie lassie.

Kate [*curtseying*]. Did you speak, sir?

Davie. I did, fair gowan blossom.

Kate. To whom may you be speaking, sir?

Davie. To your own sweet self, dear lassie.

Kate. To me, sir? And what did you say?

Davie. I said that ye were bonnie

Kate. Pshaw! That goes without the telling. Have n't you any fresher news?

Davie. Aweel, the war's over; and though that is auld news, it must be younger than your beauty.

Kate [*aside*]. How nice he is! [*Aloud.*] Where's my cousin, I wonder?

Davie. I'm grieved to say that I don't know who your cousin may be, dear lassie. I'd fain take your cousin's place, though.

Kate [*aside*]. Oh, dear, I wish he were my cousin! [*Aloud.*] But my cousin is a lassie: Alison McAllistair.

Davie. Alison McAllistair! Ye can't be Black Kitty o' the Frith?

Kate. And why can I not, sir?

Davie. But, Kitty, if ye are she, ye must needs ken me; and the more betoken that we were ance wed, — wi' the ring off the ladle handle, daft Sandy Bly acting priest.

Kate. What, Davie! Davie McAllistair! Ye can never be!

Davie. And why can I never be, Kitty?

Kate [*walking forward*]. Oh, Davie, and you have been to the war, and have come back well and unscathed, when many another man has kissed the sod.

Davie. Mony a bonnier and better than I, Kate.

Kate [*confusedly, sitting at table*]. I did not say that. [*Rising.*] Tell me all about yourself, and the broad stripes on your sleeves. [*Sitting.*] Tell me, Davie, how you got them.

Davie [*approaching*]. This one, Kitty, that made o' me a corporal, that is a gay story. We were fortifying the Point o' Dunderhead, and the captain wanted to throw up a wall to protect the hamlet, — between Garrock and Bleak Points, — ye ken the place, Kitty?

Kate. Ay. 'Tis just a bit space.

Davie. Why, yes, a little space perhaps to walk on a sheeny night, wi' a bonnie, bright maiden in the bend o' yere arm, — eh, Kate? But to pace it out in range of a couple o' Spanish brigantines who rattled shot and shell down o'er ye like perdition —

Kate. Hush!

Davie. But it was just that, girl. I was sent out to pace the distance where the earthworks were to be thrown up. The instant I showed myself on the strand the Spaniards opened fire, and rained shot around my

ears like hail on the sheiling. I ran like a goat, and never counted a step. When I reached Bleak Rocks, plague take me if I could hae told gin the distance were a hunder paces or ten thousand. It seemed a lang Scotch mile to me. "Weel dune!" says the captain; "how far do you make it?" What could I say? A lucky thought came to me as I was a getting my breath. "Captain," says I, "gie a guess." The captain squints. "A hunder and fifty yards," says he. "Good for you, captain," says I, "it's a hunder and five and forty." And as it happened, so it proved. So wi' that they pit a stripe on each arm for my service.

Kate. And a brave one it was, light as you make of it, and took a man of courage to go through with. Laugh as you will, I think so. And the other stripe?

Davie. Weel, lass, that came through a graver service. Only the night afore last, as the captain, with only my guard, was out looking at a taut smack dashing across the frith all sail set and colors flying, up comes a band o' scurvy black rascals, who were out pillaging and foraging, paying no heed to the truce. Their dirty little boat was anchored at our feet; and whether it was only in spite, or for fun, or out o' conceit that they could make our Camaroch prisoner, they shot the captain's horse and rushed upon us with cutlasses. Our captain fell under his horse. A fellow struck at him with his cutlass; I threw myself between them. Wow! but the blade was sharp, and sliced shrewdly, Kate. Well, I might not hae been here this day, but that the man-o'-war in the offing saw the fracas, fired guns and ran up signals, and the vil-

lains hurried down to their boat and pulled off. The better their haste, good faith! sin' the little sloop bowling before the wind was bringing news o' the peace to Calloch, and their raid might hae been construed into a breach o' faith, and complicated matters between the twa nations. Do ye see?

Kate. But, Davie, were you wounded?

Davie. Only a slice off my arm, lass. It bled enough for twa, and hurt some at the first. Captain Camaroch would hae it that I was disabled in the saving of his life, but our surgeon said 't was a case for the needle, not for the hospital. A needle-case, do ye mind?

Kate. Oh, Davie, how brave you are!

Davie. Pshaw! I scarce feel it now. [*Twisting left arm.*] So I got my stripes and a brand-new uniform; and now, my Kate, I'm sergeant in the regular army.

Kate. Oh, which arm was it? The wound must be worse than you make for. [*Clasps right wrist in both hands.*]

Davie. The other arm, Kitty; but it is quite weel now.

Kate [*rising*]. Well? Are you sure?

Davie [*putting arm around her waist*]. Weel enough to hug a pretty girl.

Kate [*pushing it*]. Hands off!

[*Enter Alison, BACK L. ; stops and gazes.*]

Davie. Wow! be careful! You hurt!

[*Kate sits again, but makes a feint of pushing off his arm. Playful struggle in dumb show.*]

Alis. Oh, I knew it! I knew it when I heard that

the soldiers were feasted at Calloch Frith. But, fool! Where is the difference? Calloch is only a run from Dunderhead, where the troops were stationed. Many's the long evening he's spent at Black Kitty's side, while I could neither sit nor sleep for weeping and fearing for him. And he denied that he knew her! Oh, Davie! [*Approaches and stands at front of stage, looking side-wise at Kitty and Davie.*]

Davie [*leaning on Kitty's chair*]. So that is what delayed me. I should have been here twelve hours gone by, only that I waited for my new uniform —

Alis. [*aside*]. What do I care for a new uniform?

Davie. And the [*Luis knocks at door*] commission.

Luis [*entering*]. Can this cottage afford rest for a wayfaring man who has wandered too far from the town and lost his road?

Kitty and Alis. [*stepping forward*]. Oh! a Spaniard!

Davie [*aside*]. Alison! Good heavens!

Alis. Pray be seated, sir. [*Dusts chair with apron.*]

[*Luis seats himself, after bowing profoundly on all sides. Kitty puts hat on table. Alison brings glass of water. Kitty fetches plate from closet and fills it with cakes from basket. Alison brings grapes and apples from closet.*]

Davie [*striding across stage*]. Deuce take it! I'm nowhere now! Let a man have a mustache and a foreign twist to his tongue, and every woman is ready to fly off wi' him. Oh, by all means, Kitty, feed the monkey wi' your cakes. Ah, cakes are not good enough, Alison must give him fruit! Pah! what absurdity! [*Retires BACK CENTRE, and glowers at Don Luis.*]

Alis. Shall I take your cloak, sir?

Davie. Yes, by all means take his cloak.

Kate. He looks very tired, Alison.

Alis. What's that to you? He's *my* guest, and I'll take care of him.

Kate. You need not be so hot! I doubt I sha'n't hurt him with looking at him.

Davie. Pulling caps over the black rascal a'ready. Where's my wounded arm now? Mayhap this is the very fellow that sliced it. Much does Alison care, though to be sure she doesna know. Haughty minx! Gin she would not hear my explanations when I was ready to gie them, she shall wait lang enough to hear them now.

Alis. How handsome he is! What beautiful black hair!

Kate. Troth, he sets off your beauty to greater advantage than that red-headed [*or sandy-haired, as the case may be*] Cousin Davie of thine. Put thy face closer, and thy skin will show whiter.

Alis. [*walking across stage*]. My Cousin Davie! He's as much cousin to every McAllistair in the clan.

Kitty. That's as true as if I'd said it myself.

[*Girls quarrel, LEFT FRONT.*]

Don. What beautiful girls are these that bloom on Scotland's rugged mountains! That black one [*shrugs shoulders*] does n't count. I can find a thousand such in Spain. But the fair one is a jewel worthy of the richest setting my ancient palace can afford. [*Enter Dame, R.*]

Dame. Wha hae ye gotten here, Alison?

[*Luis rises, Davie starts forward, Kate and Alison approach.*]

Alis. A weary Spanish man, mother, who has walked from town and missed his road.

Kate. It's coming on dark fast, aunt. A stranger can scarce find his way back in the murk.

Luis. I am loath to force myself upon the hospitality of a country which I have but lately been doing my little best to deprive of the means of hospitality; but the fortunes of war are such that the soldier can only obey when his king speaks. He must fight at that high behest even against a land so fair, so proud, so loyal, whose world-known songs and stories have made it dear to his heart and a Mecca to his eyes.

Davie. Flummery! bosh!

Luis. Even your own brave son —

Dame. My son! Defend's a', how the loon rins on! I hae ne'er a son, gude sir, though gin I had, it behoofs ye to speak fair o' him, Heaven kens.

Luis [*bowing*]. Pardon me, good mother; I took this handsome youth to be your soldier son. A brave lad, I'll warrant, and generous —

Davie [*thrusting forward*]. Gammon! Ye hae na spoken to me yet, aunt.

Dame. Weel, aweel, there's no hurry about that. Ye are nae that gret stranger I need to belabor mysel' to gie ye special greetin's. As for ye, sir, ye are heartily welcome, foe though ye were and fule though ye may be. I think no gret o' foreigners, nor ever heerd ony gude o' the Spanish; but sin' ye are under my sheiling and need rest and food, ye shall hae 't, and guidance on the morrow; and suld, were ye Auld Nick himself.

Luis. Thanks, kind dame. Your tone is kind and speaks to my heart, though the words that fall on my ears I cannot understand. But the language of hospitality is a language common to all nations. It has long since spoken in the eyes of these fair damsels, though their lips were mute.

Davie. Dam sells, indeed!

Dame. Weel, aweel. Fine words butter nae pars-nips. Sit doon and make yersel' ane o' us for the e'enin'.

Kitty [to *Davie*]. Is n't that splendid!

Davie. Oh, yes. Vera splendid.

Dame. Quit ye're bowin' and scrapin', mon, and make yersel' til hame, — as I wish in my heart ye were. fast enough.

Luis. I would that I understood better the words in which your kind heart attires itself. for then could I reply more fitly.

Davie [crossing stage]. Not a word o' welcome to her own brother's son and her daughter's promised gude-man, and claverin's and compliments by the cartload to a black Spanish pirate. Alison's head is rarely turned; and as for Kate, I'm fairly sick at her. [Walks back. Enter *Kimmer*, R., stands in doorway, hands upraised.]

Kimmer. Weel, aweel! They've caught ane of 'em.

[TABLEAU. — *Don Luis* and *Dame* bowing and curtsying, CENTRE; *Kimmer* in open door, hands upraised, LEFT; *Kitty* leaning on *Alison's* shoulder, RIGHT, both looking admiringly at *Don Luis*. *Davie* in background, drawing pistol.]

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same. Enter Davie, RIGHT.*

Davie. I wonder has bonnie Kitty gone the morn. Faith, I've slept no more than a cat, a thinking o' her twa black een the lee lang night! Good luck betide my haste, and grant me anither blink o' sweet Kitty's bright e'en and dimpling cheeks. [*Sound of singing a love song — Spanish if possible — without.*] Wha's that — the Don? [*Song continues.*] O Alison! Alison! false and fair! Inconstancy, thy name is woman!

[*Song ceases. Enter Don Luis, followed by Kitty and Alison, L.*]

Luis. Lovely young ladies, I would that it lay within my humble abilities to make some return for the kindness you have shown an alien, an enemy to your native land. As firm as Scotia's mountains, as deep as her fathomless waters, as warm as her sunny dells, so firm, so deep, so warm have I found the friendship of Scotia's hearts, and lasting as her deathless birch-trees shall be my memory of them. Ah! if in one of these constant hearts I could find an abiding place [*taking Alison's hand*]. — if I might believe that a Scottish heath-flower would bloom in Spanish soil!

[*Davie pushes between.*]

Davie. Enough! Who are you that comes here and proposes to transplant a heath-flower in which, I would have you know, sir, I have some interest?

[*Don folds arms and looks down upon Davie.*]

Luis. I am the Don Luis Campeador. Who are you?

Davie. I am the betrothed husband of Alison McAlhstair! [*Kate screams.*]

Alis. Why, no, Davie. Indeed, sir, we are not betrothed — only a sort of an understanding. [*Begins to cry.*]

Luis. Is this the lady who is your bride?

Davie. My bride in the face of heaven and earth! Let him who dare, gainsay it!

[*Kate covers face and retreats to back of stage.*]

Alis. What is *she* crying for? Oh, I knew it! I knew it!

[*Alison throws herself in chair and sobs violently. Luis approaches.*]

Luis. Sweet and dear lady —

Davie [*thrusting himself between*]. Hands off! Coward! [*Luis seizes Davie by shoulder and wheels him off. Davie slaps Don Luis across face with back of hand. Luis draws sword, Davie presents pistol. Don puts up sword and waves hand majestically toward the door.*]

Luis. Let us settle the affair like gentlemen, like brigands. Come, we cannot quarrel before the ladies. Come, sir!

Davie. Ane word, Alison. Are you not promised to me? [*Lays hand on her shoulder.*]

Alis. Let me be, Davie. Oh, dear! oh, dear!

Luis. Fair lady, I kiss your feet! Are you promised to this signor, my very dear friend?

Alis. Oh, I am so wretched!

Luis. My friend, we will settle this simple affair yonder. Come. [*Exit, R.*]

[*Davie looks at girls. Both are crying and do not notice him. Exit Davie slowly, R.*]

Alis. [*raises head*]. Oh, he is gone! [*Looking around wildly.*] Oh, I shall never, never see one like him again! So handsome, so manly, so perfect a gentleman, so noble!

Kate [*angrily*]. To my mind, that black Spaniard cannot hold a candle to your own cousin Davie.

Alis. If you admire my cousin Davie so, why don't you take him and keep him? I don't want him! [*Sobs.*] What did you let him come home at all for? Why didn't you keep him always at Calloch Frith? Great pleasure it gave me to see him! I don't fancy cold scraps after other folk have had the pick of the dish.

Kate. As if I didn't know a jealous woman when I saw her!

Alis. [*rising*]. I'm not jealous! But 't was a lie he told. We are not betrothed. Mother would not let us be till the war was closed. [*Walking about.*]

Kate. Well, the war is closed now, and I suppose you'll hold him to his bargain. Oh, Modesty! I'd be ashamed to show that I cared so much for any man. [*Crosses over.*]

Alis. [*stamps*]. I don't care for Davie! I hate him!

Kate [*crossing back*]. You couldn't! It's not in woman's nature.

Alis. [*crossing over*]. It's in my nature, anyway. I despise him! The little, vain, soft, conceited, selfish —

Kate [*stamping*]. He's not selfish, nor vain, nor conceited, and you do not deserve to have such a cousin! [*Enter Dame, R.*]

Dame. Och, God preserve's all! Here's murther,

murther on the spot. Lassies, what hae ye been doin'?

Alis. Murder, mother?

Kate. Who is murdered, aunt?

Dame. Baith on 'em! Och, wirra, worra! wirra, worra! ochone, ochone! and it's the wark o' ye twa fickle jauds!

Alison and Kate [each speaking to the other]. Now see what you have done!

Dame. Rin and stop 'em, lassies! They'll heed young tongues better than auld, maybe. Rin and stop 'em before waur comes o' 't!

Alison and Kate. Stop them?

[*Pistol shot heard outside. Girls scream.*]

Dame. Oh, it's too late, it's too late! He's dead, he's dead! [*Throws apron over head, and sinks into chair, rocking back and forth, and crying, Ochone, ochone!*]

Kate. Davie! Davie! You've killed him, Alison! [*Leans against wall as though faint with fear.*]

[*Another pistol shot heard.*]

Alis. [*shrieks*]. Oh, Don Luis! [*Rushes out door, R.*]

[*Enter Luis supporting Alison, whose face is covered with both hands, followed by Davie.*]

Luis. Are you satisfied now, my good sir?

Davie. 'To the victor belong the spoils.

Kate [*raising her head*]. Davie, Davie, are you safe? Are you unhurt? Oh, tell me that you are alive! [*Rushes to Davie, and hangs about his neck.*]

Luis [*laughing.*]. Are you now satisfied, sir? That was better than boring one another through with cold

lead. The powder has not been wasted, since the same end is gained, I fancy, which was to make this sweet lady declare her preference —

Davie. No, you are mistaken there, Don !

Luis [*waving hand and shrugging shoulders*]. Still, are you satisfied, my dear friend?

Davie [*kissing Kate*]. Yes, I am satisfied.

Dame. Bless my auld een !

Tableau.

DAME.

LUIS AND ALISON.

DAVIE AND KATE.

Curtain.

ACT III.

[*Strathspey or Scotch reel performed by the actors, according to the fancy of the manager.*]

[The beauty of this play depends upon the costumes, which should be gotten up with as much exactness as possible.]

A PRETTY PIECE OF PROPERTY.

Dramatised from "The Lost Wager."

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS.

MARY WILTON.

MYRA KARL.

SOPHIE WILTON.

MR. KARL.

KATE WILTON.

JARVIS, a Servant.

RUSSEL WILTON, Cousin to the girls.

SCENE I.—*Room with window. Enter Mary and Sophie with arms entwined. Cross to window and stand one on either side.*

Mary [*speaking as she enters*]. So Russel is gone at last. How we shall miss him! he has kept the house so lively all winter.

Sophie. But we have Katie left. What a witch that child is!

Mary. What a frolic she and Russel keep up! There goes the carriage around the corner. [*Girls wave handkerchiefs.*] Good by to you, cousin!

Sophie. Do you know Katie's last piece of mischief? She has wagered to play a trick on Russel before the week is out. To-day is Thursday.

Mary. How can she, and he a hundred miles away?

Sophie. That is the fun of it. Russ was congratu-

lating himself on getting away from her practical jokes, and she staked her gold chain against his ring that she would play him the worst trick yet by Monday.

Mary. Three days! Trust her to do it. She would be glad to win his ring.

[*Enter Kate laughing.*] I have done it! I have won my wager!

Mary and Sophie. What do you mean, child?

Kate. You see, papa asked me to look over the letter of introduction he had written for Coz to give Mr. Karl. I was all alone in the library, and—I could not help it—I wrote a parody on it. Ha, ha, ha!

Sophie. A parody, Kate?

Kate. Yes. You have heard that Mr. Karl has a beautiful daughter, Myra? Well, I wrote that Russ was in search of a *wife*, instead of a *farm*. Wherever papa wrote “land” or “estate,” I wrote “wife.” Wasn’t it fun! I did not mean the letter to go, really; but I had only just signed it with a great flourish when in came papa with Russel himself, picked up the letter, slipped it into an envelope, sealed it and gave it to Coz right before my face and eyes, and I could not say a word. Oh, my! I have certainly won the ring, and won it so easily. What fun!

Mary. Yes, but lost something worth more. ’T was scarcely politic in you to send Cousin Russel elsewhere to find a wife, Katie.

Kate. What! you do not suppose that Myra Karl, if she has the spirit of a fly, would accept a man who asks for her as he would for a house-lot? Of course she will give him a flat refusal. But I never once thought of sending the letter, truly; I only wanted to

read it to Russ, just to tease him. You need not look so sober, Mary ; I don't care a fig for Russ, — would rather have his ring than his hand, any day. Sophie is the one to feel disturbed, she has tried to get him so hard. [*Bell rings.*] There's the tea-bell.

Sophie. I, Katie ! What do you mean ?

Mary [*aside*]. Oh, I can see through a knot-hole if 'tis big enough. As you saw no way of getting Russel's hand, you tried for his ring, ah ?

Kate. Oh, pshaw ! I tell you, Mary, I don't care for Russ. [*Exit girls.*]

Music.

SCENE II. — *Mr. Karl's parlor. Table with books, two chairs. Enter Mr. Karl with visiting card and letter, servant following.*

Jarvis. Shall I show the gentleman up, sir ?

Mr. Karl [*sits and reads letter*]. Ah, from my old college chum, Wilton, as I live. Remarkable change in his handwriting, but time alters us all. Haven't heard from him for twenty years. Well, well, a cool request, upon my word ! Nephew wants a wife, and has heard I have a pretty daughter with lots of money. Wants me to aid him with my well-known experience in such matters. What does the rascal mean ? *Jarvis !* [*Yes, sir.*] Go kick the impudent young rascal out of the house. [*Yes, sir.*] No, stop a bit. [*Yes, sir.*] Need n't be in such a hurry. I'll see what Myra says. An excellent family, those Wiltons. This letter is just like Job Wilton ; he had singular notions. always.

Rather hard understanding such matters, but there is nothing like a dash of originality in this world. If the boy is rich, and Myra has no objection — might as well see him. Jarvis, show the young gentleman up.

Jarvis. Yes, sir. [*Exit. Re-enter with Russell W.*] Mr. Wilton, sir. [*Exit.*]

Mr. Karl. Happy to see you, Mr. Wilton. Take a seat, sir.

R. W. I have thought some of settling in this vicinity, Mr. Karl, and my uncle telling me that you had a valuable piece of property you might feel disposed to part with, I have called to see it.

Mr. K. [aside]. Piece of property! Really, sir, this is a very strange request. One can hardly be expected to answer definitely on so short notice.

R. W. Certainly not; I have no wish to hurry you. Still, I am rather anxious to see it for myself. If you will favor me with a brief description of the prominent features of—

Mr. K. What do you mean, sir? What do you mean?

R. W. Why, sir, it is best not to be too precipitous in a matter of so much importance. As its present owner, you know its chief merits.

Mr. K. [aside]. If this is a fair specimen of the rising generation, they are about as impudent a set of jackanapes as I want to see. But I owe something to my long friendship with Job Wilton; I won't turn the puppy out of door yet awhile.

R. W. I suppose it is healthy.

Mr. K. What's healthy?

R. W. Your property. Sometimes on these low

grounds diseases are apt to prevail. I wish to be cautious in my selection.

Mr. K. [starting up]. Do you think Myra has the fever and ague? [*Walks across stage*]. I'll send my daughter to you, young man; that will settle the business at once, sir, at once. [*Exit.*]

R. W. Well, the manners and customs of this locality are rather odd, to say the least. I came to consult an old gentleman about purchasing land of him, and he bounces out of the room and sends his daughter. What on earth I'm to say to her, I'd like to know. I hate strong-minded, business women.

[*Takes up a book and reads. Enter Myra. Stands looking at him.*]

Myra [aside]. What an idea! To be put on exhibition like one of papa's prize oxen! He has a splendid mustache.

R. W. [looks up, throws down book. Aside]. She does n't look strong-minded.

Myra [aside.] Beautiful Spanish eyes. [*Sits down, blushing.*]

R. W. [glances at her]. Really, quite pretty and modest. Hem! Very fine weather we are having, Miss Karl.

Myra [archly]. Yes, sir. Only it is threatening rain, and quite windy.

R. W. Ah, yes! I believe you are right. Your father has a fine place.

Myra. I think so. Oh, there is a lovely cedar grove on the knoll across the river. Father wants to sell it. It's too bad, 't is so beautiful!

R. W. I may wish to become the purchaser. I

think I will look at it. Your father has told you that I have an idea of settling here?

Myra [confusedly]. Oh, yes, sir! oh, yes! he has told me so. [*A long pause.*]

R. W. Will you mention to your father that I will call to see him about this matter to-morrow morning, Miss Karl? [*Rises.*]

[*Myra jumps up and runs from the room in confusion.*]

R. W. Very singular family. I can't understand them. But she is an uncommonly pretty girl, though so bashful. I shall certainly take an early morning walk through that grove of cedars to-morrow, and judge of her taste. [*Exit.*]

Music.

SCENE III. — *Same.* Enter *Mr. Karl*, followed by *Russel Wilton*.

R. W. Yes, sir, I have seen the property in question, and am perfectly delighted. A fine, healthy investment; no disease about it, I should judge. But then, it is not what I call *low*. I would be pleased to take a second, more thorough inspection, in your society, sir, if you please.

Mr. K. Really, Mr. Wilton, my daughter has not come down stairs yet.

R. W. [*aside*]. What has his daughter to do about it?—Of course I will wait a convenient time for you, sir. I noticed considerable natural roughness, but I presume there is susceptibility to improvement. A

little judicious cultivation will doubtless accomplish wonders.

Mr. K. [angrily]. Let me tell you, young man, that I consider my —

R. W. [aside]. What a touchy old fellow! I am determined, sir, to secure this rural gem at any price. What is the sum you ask?

Mr. K. Upon my word, you talk as if this was a mere matter of business. What *sum* do I ask?

R. W. That is the way I have heretofore been accustomed to treat such affairs, sir.

Mr. K. Heretofore! You have been accustomed! And pray, sir, how many such little affairs have you had on your hands?

R. W. Oh, several. I am not so inexperienced as you suppose.

Mr. K. Aren't you ashamed to confess it, you puppy?

R. W. No, sir; why should I be?

Mr. K. Get out of my house, you young reprobate! To come here and offer to buy my daughter as if she were a patch of potatoes? Clear out, I say! Come, start!

R. W. Your daughter, Mr. Karl?

Mr. K. Yes, my daughter, you young jackanapes.

R. W. But I'm not bargaining for your daughter, Mr. Karl; I'm bargaining for that land across the river.

Mr. K. Oh, yes, a fine story. But let me tell you that your uncle's letter has informed me of your atrocious designs.

Mr. K. Will you allow me to see the letter, sir?

Mr. K. [*pulls letter from pocket and throws to R. W.*]. Read that, sir. [*R. W. reads and laughs.*] It is no laughing matter, not at all!

R. W. We are all the victims of a ridiculous mistake, Mr. Karl. My uncle never wrote this letter. 'Tis the work of my mischievous Cousin Kate. The genuine document must have been left behind.

Mr. K. And you did not come to look for a wife?

R. W. I came to purchase real estate.

Mr. K. What! Here's my hand, boy! I'm heartily ashamed of the opprobrious names I have called you. But Myra and I thought you were after her, and I didn't like your manners. Here comes the little minx; I must go tell her what a blunder I've made.

[*Enter Myra with flowers in her hand. Stops, embarrassed.*]

R. W. Stay, sir. Will you allow me to make the necessary explanations myself? Perhaps, having selected a home, I may enter into business-like negotiations for a charming young wife to preside over it, and the same person may furnish both home and wife, if he will.

Mr. K. As you please, my lad; I give my consent. [*R. W. approaches Myra.*] That will atone for my villanous treatment awhile ago. Ha, ha, ha! a good joke as I ever heard. Fine-looking young fellow, too; Myra must fancy him.

[*Mr. Karl rubs his hands and walks up and down stage, watching Wilton and Myra, and uttering delighted exclamations. Wilton talks in dumb show, and taking flowers one by one, arranges them in her hair. Myra retains the last, which she fastens in his button-hole. He leads her to Mr. K.*]

Mr. K. Well, my lad, what does she say?

R. W. She says, sir, that she has no serious objections.

[*Myra pulls away her hand and runs off stage.*]

Mr. K. Here, you witch; why don't you ask your pa's consent? [*Exit.*]

R. W. [*soliloquizing*]. Well, Cousin Kate, you have fairly won your wager. Hope you will enjoy the wearing of my ring, and be pleased at the successful termination of your little joke. I feel perfectly satisfied. [*Exit.*]

Music.

THE LOVER'S STRATAGEM.

— — — — —
A PARLOR PLAY IN SIX SCENES.
— — — — —

CHARACTERS :

SQUIRE HINSDALE A rich bachelor.
ROWLAND His nephew, just from college.
NATHALIE GWYNNE A cottage-girl, Rowland's sweetheart.
MOTHER GWYNNE Grandmother to Nathalie.
STELLA MURDOCH An authoress.
MADGE Maid to Stella.

SCENE I. — *Parlor at Hinsdale Hall. Stage set with two entrances. Mr. Hinsdale and Rowland discovered, reading, at opposite sides of stage.*

Squire [*throws down paper, yawns*]. ROWLAND, what a life we are leading here !

Row. [*laying down book.*] It is both quiet and pleasant, uncle. [*Resumes reading.*]

Squire. Pleasant ! Quiet ! I say, Rowland, look at me !

Row. You are looking finely this morning. I never saw you appear better. Your countenance is as smooth and fresh as at sixteen. I believe it is your continual flow of benevolence, and habitual good humor, that —

Sq. Bah ! haven't you eyes ? I say, look at me ! [*Row. flings book on table, and yawns.*] Can't you see how withered I am ? Old before my time ?

Row. Withered, uncle ! Not a bit. You weigh

more to-day than ever before in your life. Three hundred, if you weigh a pound. [*Laughs.*]

Sq. Bloated, boy, bloated! I'm an unhappy, miserable old fellow. [*Rises and walks about stage.*]

Row. [*laughing.*] Miserable! You!

Sq. [*standing opposite Row., with hands under coat-tails.*] The consequence of living all my days a bachelor! You see how bitterly I repent it, don't you? Of course you do; you cannot help it; and I advise you to take warning by my unhappy fate. [*Row. laughs.*] It is no laughing matter, and I desire you to be serious, for, mind you, Rowland, I have taken it into my head to marry you off!

Row. [*surprised.*] Sho!

Sq. Astonished, are you? It is full time your condition was bettered.

Row. Why, uncle, how can it be bettered? Living in the sunshine of your bounty, I am perfectly contented.

Sq. Are you? Well, I am not! [*Walks about stage.*] Look you! what good is it to me to keep you here, indulging you in idleness? It is no comfort to me, but I mean you shall be. You shall get married; you shall bring a young and handsome wife home to the Hall. We want some one to make music for us,—some one to wake the dusty echoes with her merry laugh,—some one to cheer these old rooms with her sparkling eyes, to make the whole house light and bright with the radiance of her smiles. [*Row. laughs.*] What now? [*sharply.*]

Row. O uncle! You are so romantic!

Sq. [*sits down heavily.*] Romantic! I don't know

as I ever was so sensible in my life. I am in good earnest, at any rate. I say you shall get married!

Row. That I will.

Sq. And I have picked you out a wife.

Row. No!

Sq. Yes, I have.

Row. Whew! Really, Uncle Hinsdale, I think, by good rights —

Sq. I ought to choose for you! Now, see here! you care no more for one woman than another; then let my experience and taste dictate. You will admire my choice. In the first place, I have looked for beauty. Of course you desire your wife beautiful?

Row. Yes, and —

Sq. And spirited?

Row. Certainly, provided —

Sq. And intelligent?

Row. Of course, but —

Sq. Talented and rich!

Row. Oh! as to that, I do not think wealth of consequence.

Sq. Then leave my house this instant! If wealth is of no consequence to you, I will make some one my heir who can appreciate its benefits.

Row. But in a wife —

Sq. Gold never comes amiss. Get a rich wife, if you can; if you cannot, that alters the case. Now the lady I have chosen possesses all these excellent qualities — beauty, spirit, intelligence, accomplishments, talents — and is — rich! [*Row. walks about stage.*] What more could a happy fellow wish?

Row. A little love.

Sq. If you cannot love Miss Stella Murdoch you are not capable of loving any woman.

Row. [*stops aghast.*] Stella Murdoch!

Sq. [*rising.*] She is the woman to make you a good wife. [*Rubs hands.*] She will have you; go and offer yourself as soon as you please. Despatch! [*Exit, L.*]

Row. [*walking back and forth.*] Marriage! and to Miss Murdoch! It is terrible! terrible to contemplate! No, no. [*Strikes forehead.*] I'll elope with Nathalie first. But then that won't do; uncle would never forgive me. If I had the least bit of property I could call my own, it would be a different thing. But to disobey Uncle Hinsdale would be to turn myself out of doors. That would be far from bettering my condition. Still, I cannot give up Nathalie! I must pretend to please uncle, and find some means of escape. Marry Miss Murdoch! [*Shrugs shoulders.*] Never! [*Exit, R.*]

CURTAIN.

SCENE II. — *A room in Mother Gwynne's cottage. Enter L. Nathalie, with flowers. Flings straw bonnet on table, and, leaning against it, shakes her forefinger at Rowland, who follows.*

Nath. You have looked so sober all the while we were gathering the flowers. Now I will play father confessor to you. Come, commence.

Row. [*bending one knee.*] Father, dear father, I've come to confess.

Nath. Well, child, well.

Row. [*suddenly.*] To speak the truth, fair confessor, my reason for calling this morning was to tell you — that I am — going — away, and I shall not see you again — until to-morrow.

Nath. Oh, how you startled me! It sounds so solemn, — I am going away. I shall not see you again. But, until to-morrow, changes it entirely. You will tell me where you are going, of course.

Row. Would you think it? Uncle has determined I shall marry, and I am going to court Miss Stella Murdoch. You have heard of her, perhaps. She comes to our church sometimes.

Nath. Why, Rowland, what jest are you having?

Row. It is no jest. I am in earnest. There is nothing out of the way in my courting Miss Murdoch, is there? I shall pay her my addresses and offer her my hand. Ah! what is this, — my Nathalie in tears?

Nath. [*hiding her face.*] Oh, you have been very kind, — like a brother to me; and when you are married — and bring a — a wife — to the Hall — I shall have no one to read to me any longer. [*Goes hurriedly across the stage and puts flowers in brown pitcher on shelf, R.*].

Row. [*following.*] Nathalie, dear Nathalie, is this all? Say you love me, Nathalie; that you would die of jealousy if I should marry Miss Murdoch. [*Takes her hand, she withdraws it.*]

Nath. Mr. Rowland, I never thought you would trifle with any one's feelings in this way. [*Covers face and sobs.*]

Row. Nathalie, darling Nathalie, forgive me. I had no intention of trifling with your feelings, for I

love you. My heart is yours, my whole life at your command.

Nath. Ah, what can I believe? You contradict yourself. If you love me, how can you offer yourself to Miss Murdoch?

Row. I love you to please myself. I offer myself to Miss Murdoch to please my uncle.

Nath. [*comes down.*] I thought you were a man of principle and honor.

Row. [*following.*] You misunderstood, Nathalie. I shall offer myself to Miss Murdoch, for I *must* obey my uncle. [*Nath. sighs and moves off.*] But I swear never to marry unless—[*falls on one knee and possesses himself of her hand,*] your hand, Nathalie, is the reward of my true love. You or no one, Nathalie, darling, shall be my wife. Dearest, shall not this sweet reward be mine?

Nath. [*smiles and places both hands in his.*] Dear Rowland, I am yours. [*Row. kisses hands and rises.*] Yet to me you speak in riddles. [*Sighs.*]

Row. To be plain, then, sweetheart, my uncle's will is a rock of adamant to me. He orders, and I must obey. So there is nothing left for me but to offer myself to Miss Murdoch. She will refuse me. Then I am free, and by degrees I can bring Uncle Hinsdale to think more favorably of you.

Nath. But this fair lady may not refuse you.

Row. Depend upon it, she will.

Nath. Ah, how can she!

Row. [*places arm around waist and crosses stage.*] Little one, I shall not woo her as I do you.

Nath. But if you should forget that you were ad-

dressing her in fun, and should fall in love with her in earnest?

Row. [*relinquishes her waist and stands before her laughing.*] Jealous already, my Nathalie? Fear nothing. I have loved you too long and know you too well to forget you for a scribbling, half-mad blue, with thoughts so far from earth that unless among the clouds one cannot converse with her. The only thing that shows she is of mortal mould is the black spot she wears forever on her right forefinger.

Nath. Ah, but Rowland, you have not seen Miss Murdoch lately; she may have altered.

Row. True, I have not mingled much in society since my return from Oxford, thanks to a certain pair of bright eyes, but I know of her from report as a poetess and *bas bleu*. Do not see what could have induced Uncle Hinsdale to choose her! He could have suited me much better nearer home, and saved me some trouble besides. But I must bid farewell and hasten off, as my first call is to be made this morning. [*Attempts to kiss her, succeeds after a little playful struggle.*] Good-by, my Nathalie; I'll call and walk to-morrow. [*Exit L.*]

Nath. [*comes down rubbing cheek and blushing.*] What a dear fellow he is, and knows so much! I hope he will succeed. Oh, if he should not! But then I know he will. While grandmother is gone I'll read awhile in the book he brought me. [*Takes book from shelf behind pitcher.*] I can hide it before she returns from market. [*Sits at table, reads awhile, then speaks.*] Grandmother does dislike him so. She said she would tell his uncle, the squire, if she found him here again.

[*Sighs and covers her face with one hand.*] But, oh! I love him so I cannot give him up. But suppose I have to; suppose he fails, and Miss Murdoch accepts him. Oh, dear! [*Sits lost in thought. Without.*] Nathalie! Nathalie! [*Enter grandmother with big basket.*] Nathalie, child!

[*Nathalie springs up, drops her book, and comes down, R. Grandmother picks up book, setting basket on table.*]

Grand. What have you here, a book?

Nath. [*aside.*] Oh! I forgot the book!

Grand. Has the young Squire been here this morning? [*Nath. hangs her head.*] Child, child! [*Grand. sinks into chair, L.*] You'll bring my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave! What do you expect, a rich young man like him, heir of Hinsdale Hall, caring for a cottage girl like you? You are crazy, crazy. And so am I, to let this thing go on! I'll send you off. I'll go now! [*Starts up. Nath. crosses stage.*]

Nath. But, grandma, won't you tell me where you'll send me first? Maybe I'll not want to go.

[*Grand. comes down L.*]

Grand. Not want to go, you huzzy! Not want to go! I'll tell you where. I'm going to ask the Squire to get you a place as waiting-maid to some fine lady.

Nath. [*clasps her hands.*] O, grandma, grandma!

Grand. And why not, pray? Now there is Miss Murdoch, at the Oaks —

Nath. Oh! [*Aside.*] I must coax her a little. [*Aloud.*] I would not go this morning, grandma; it is a long walk to the Hall. Wait until afternoon.

[*Comes to untie her bonnet strings.*] Hadn't you better?

Grand. [*sinks into chair.*] Yes, I will, for I am tired. My walk was long for my old legs.

Nath. [*taking off her bonnet and red cloak.*] Grandma, what would you do without your little Nathalie? Who would pick your cherries and cress, and hunt your eggs, if I was gone away? Who will do up your caps, now your eye-sight fails you so? Ah! mother! [*pats her under her chin.*] I know you'll not be sending away your little one. You was only in fun, wasn't you?

Grand. Well, well; we'll see about it. My marketing bothered me, child, and that made me cross. [*Rises and goes to table. Nath. takes bonnet and cloak out R., carrying off book.*] What shall I do with that child? Nathalie!

Nath. [*stepping back into room.*] Yes, grandma.

Grand. One thing is certain. You don't see young Hinsdale any more; now mind that! There, take away the things.

Nath. Yes, grandma. [*Exit, R.*]

Grand. [*fussing among packages in basket.*] That child does with me just as she pleases. H'm! H'm! But I will not have her seeing that young Squire so much. [*Enter Nath.*]

Nath. Why do you hate Mr. Rowland so, grandma?

Grand. I don't hate him, child; but I say he's not a fitting one to be hanging around here so much. I've nothing against him but his high birth —

Nath. And that he can't help, grandma.

Grand. It is all well enough, unless he begins making love to you, child; but that I will not have.

Nath. [*taking basket.*] I'll make you a cup of tea, presently. [*Exit.*]

Grand. No, I won't have the Squire making love to his little foster-sister. She must go away. I'll start her now. [*Crosses stage.*] Dear, dear, what can I do without her? I'll wait a bit till I get rested. [*Sits, R.*] I'll wait till she's drawn the tea. Dear child, the cottage would be lonely without her. I'll let matters stand awhile, and see how they work. Hurry mars more than it makes.

CURTAIN.

SCENE III. — *Miss Murdoch's sanctum. Table, floor, and chairs strewn with books, manuscript, etc. Madge dusting. Window with long curtains, R. Entrance, L.*

Madge. Mercy! what a clutter! I wish that I might sweep up a bit. I'll just tidy the table. [*Looks over manuscript.*] I wonder what Miss Stella is writing now? Something or other about the trees, and the moon, and how somebody is in love with somebody, and somebody else is in love with the same somebody — Gracious! If there she isn't coming now, reading her new piece of nonsense. I'll hide, and find out which was the somebody that somebody loved.

[*Madge hides in long window curtains, leaving feather duster lying on table. Miss S. enters with manuscript in hand. On her right forefinger is*

painted a conspicuous black stain. As she recites, she stands by table, and mechanically grasps duster, waving in gesticulation, at which Mudge peeps out and laughs. Her hair and dress are in disorder.]

Miss S. [reads]:

“Love in itself is very good,
But 'tis by no means solid food;
And ere their honeymoon is o'er,
They'll find they wanted something more.”

That is just what I wanted. Beautiful, beautiful! How finely I am progressing. I hope no one will disturb my writing this afternoon. With the Countess of Winchester I would feign implore:—

[Recites.]

“Give me, O indulgent Fate,
Give me, yet before I die,
A sweet, but absolute retreat,
'Mong paths so lost, and trees so high,
That the world may ne'er invade
Thro' such windings, and such shade,
My unshaken liberty.”

But this will not finish my poem. Ah! yes! My poem! In the second edition of my book,—ahem! that is, when the poem is written and the first edition sold,—I shall have a lithograph of myself, that the world, in seeing it, may say, “Gifted and worshipped one, genius and grace play in each motion, and beam in thy face.” *[Sits and looks over manuscript.]* Let me see; where was I? Oh! Susaline Jeannette Abigail Marie Dickerson is about to answer Alphonso Goëthe James John Gerry, who is down on his knee. *[Tosses head.]* I'd never marry a man who did not go down on *both* knees before me.

Madge [*peeping out*]. Do you hear her? And she 'd jump at the chance if anybody would offer.

Miss S. [*reads*]:

Love! O young love!
Why hast thou not security? Thou art
Like a bright river on whose course the weeds
Are thick and heavy. Briars are on its banks,
And jagged stones and rocks are 'mid its waves.

[*Writes.*] Susaline must blush. "O'er pallid lip, and cheek, and brow, rush up the burning flood." Then Alphonso Goëthe says, "Oh thou resplendent one, whose —"

[*Madge rushes in.*]

Madge. There's a man, a young man, just a-coming up the avenue, all dressed up, and you look so. Let me fix you up a little. [*Runs and looks out of window.*]

Miss S. A man! and what of that? Are men so scarce that we should gaze at them like gaping fools at some low juggler clown?

Madge [*fetches well-worn comb and brush from window-seat*]. O Miss Stella! Do stop your nonsense, and let me make you look like other folks. [*Pulls out hair-pins, letting hair fall over Miss S.'s shoulders. Miss S. rises abruptly.*]

Miss S. Fair looks are naught, and decorations vain.

Madge. But common decency is something. Come let me fix your hair. [*Tries to draw her into chair. Miss S. comes down stage, flinging hair back from her face.*]

Miss S. Let my hair be. When young men call, they call on me, not on my hair.

Madge [*arranging her dress*]. But they — [*Aside.*] What shall I do? [*Aloud.*] They'd like — [*Bell rings.*] Oh dear! there's the bell. You sit down; I'll run tell the footman to have him wait till I dress your hair.

Miss S. [*in a stately manner.*] Go and admit the gentleman at once.

Madge [*aside*]. Well, she'll just spoil her market. [*Exit, L.*]

Miss S. It will never do to be caught in a flurry. [*Sits at table, in a musing attitude.*] I must appear to be composing poetry. [*Poses with pen-handle on lip.*]

Madge [*entering*]. It is young Mr. Hinsdale. [*Presents card.*]

Miss S. How do you know who it is, Madge?

Madge. I saw him at church last Sunday. [*Aside.*] Ahem! it's a pity if I can't read, brought up in this literary confusion. [*Draws back hair.*] Do let me fix you some before you see him. [*Miss S. flirts her hair out of maid's hands.*] You don't know what a nice young man he is.

Miss S. Silence! Go and invite the gentleman up. [*Exit Madge, L.*] Young Mr. Hinsdale, just from college. He shows his taste in coming here. They say he's very learned.

[*Enter Madge; announces*]: Mr. Hinsdale.

[*Enter Row., with hat on. Stands and stares around with open mouth. Miss S. motions him to a seat. Row. follows her motions with his eyes, and remains standing.*]

Miss S. Good morning, Mr. Hinsdale. You honor

us in calling at the Oaks. You will excuse me if I write one word, and finish my sentence, as you know how great the difficulty if an author pauses with a line but half complete. [*Writes a moment, then lays down her pen.*] My task is finished. Pray be seated, Mr. Hinsdale. [*Rises and motions him to a chair.*] I make it a point to write six hours a day. I secure the time by rising at three in the morning. Madge, hand the gentleman a chair.

[*Row. looks at chair. Takes off hat, and looks as though he would put it in seat of chair. Then sits down and holds hat.*]

Miss S. Madge, take the gentleman's hat.

Row. No consequence; I can hold it.

Miss S. No, indeed! Madge, take Mr. Hinsdale's hat.

[*Row. reaches out awkwardly, and drops it. Madge giggles as she picks it up.*]

Row. I said it was of no consequence. I could hold it.

Miss S. Madge, leave the room. [*Exit Madge. Miss S. sits.*] Did you not find the walk delightful? A lovely path, through a green-sward wagon-way that, like a cathedral aisle, completely roofed with branches, runs through the gloomy wood, having at either end a gothic door, wide open. Oh! Don't you love the woods, where one can see the wond'rous hand of nature writing everywhere?

Row. I never saw anything writing in the woods. [*Silence. Row. plays with bandanna handkerchief.*] I can't say that I do like the woods very well. I'm always frightened for fear I shall see a snake.

Miss S. Yes, the snakes are monsters. Yet, after all, there is a classic memory about them. They remind us of the time when —

“The victor Perseus, with the gorgon head,
O'er Libyan sands his airy journey sped ;
The gory drops distilled, as swift he flew,
And from each drop envenomed serpents grew.”

Row. Why, now, wasn't that awful! I should n't think anybody would have flew around planting snakes so.

Miss S. [*smiles.*] Did you not love the ancient mythology? See

“Lions and centaurs, gorgons, hydras, rise,
And gods and heroes blaze along the skies.”

[*As Miss S. recites, she gesticulates toward the window, and Row. follows her motions with his eyes, as though he expected to see gods and heroes in the distant clouds.*]

Row. It's a fine thing, Miss Stella, they never set the sky afire. Don't you think so?

Miss S. [*aside.*] I must try something else. [*Aloud.*] Are you fond of writing? Of tracing on the sheet of pearly white the thoughts that stir a kingdom through and through?

Row. [*shakes head emphatically.*] No; I cannot say that I like writing, for I get my fingers all daubed, and it takes so long to wear the black off. [*Looks at hands.*]

Miss S. [*bites her lip.*] What is an ink-spot to a never-dying name, an ever-living fame? Are you fond

of poetry? Poetry is the only thing I think or read of —

“Feeding my soul upon the soft, and sweet,
And delicate imaginings of song ;
For as nightingales do upon the glow-worm feed,
So poets live upon the living light ”—

Row. [*yawns.*] That don't seem to rhyme anywhere.

Miss S. I see you do not enjoy poetry.

Row. [*earnestly.*] I don't know. I used to like it when I was a little chap. I remember there was one piece —

“When I was a little boy, my mammy kept me in ;
Now I am a great boy, I'm fit to serve the king.
I can handle a musket, I can smoke a pipe,
And I can kiss a pretty girl at ten o'clock at night.”

[*Smacks lips, and draws hand across mouth.*]

Miss S. [*contemptuously.*] You are one of those, I see —

“Who scorn the lowing cattle,
But burn to wear a uniform,
Hear guns, and see a battle.”

Row. Yes, hear guns! I like that. How would you like to stand in a battle, Miss Stella, and have a big cannon-ball come booming along, and knock the fellow side of you to kingdom come, and spatter his brains and things all over your uniform?

Miss S. Horrid!

Row. I wish you'd say that piece about hearing guns again, Miss Stella; I liked that. [*Distant thunder.*] Gracious! You don't suppose there is a tempest coming, do you?

Miss S. [goes to window]. I think there is. A dark cloud seems to be rising, and the tall, sweet primrose bends its head as if it felt the omnipotent and deep-breathing air.

Row. [rising]. Why! Don't you feel frightened in a storm?

Miss S. [scornfully]. Frightened? No! [*Comes down, R.*] To me there is something glorious, sublime, in the dark, towering tempest-cloud, as it comes rolling up and darkens the far horizon. [*Thunder.*]

Row. Oh!

Miss S. [aside]. A brave soldier, truly! As Festus says —

“Thunder is but a momentary thing;
Like a world's death-rattle, and like death.
Lightning, like the blaze of sin, can blind
Only and slay.”

[*Thunder very near.*]

Row. Oh! dear! Oh! dear! [*Walks back and forth.*]

Miss S. [looking from window]. —

“Cloudy and shapeless first, forms on the mind,
Slow darkling into some gigantic make.
How the heart shakes with pride and fear,
As heaven quakes under its own thunder.”

[*A flash of lightning, followed by thunder.*]

Miss S. Glorious! It has struck the opposite tree!

Row. [trembling]. Horrible! We shall all be killed.

Miss S. The tempest comes quickly. How sublime, how grand! [*Sudden and heavy shower of rain.*]

Row. [crouches down in chair]. Had n't you better come away from that window, Miss Murdoch? It's

TABLEAU VI.

[All stand. Minister "dencons out," two lines at a time, the following verse. Choir sing, while Zekle and Huldah are covered with confusion, and utterly unable to carry their parts.]

This is the way I long have sought,
And mourned because I found it not;
And now I'm in, I'll never stray,
But thank my stars I've found the way.

CURTAIN.

ELIZABETH CARISBROOKE WITH A "P."

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

ELIZABETH PLYMPTON CARISBROOKE (Miss Carisbrooke *with a P.*).

ELIZABETH CARISBROOKE (Cousin to Miss Carisbrooke *with a P.*).

MRS. CARISBROOKE GLUMM (Mother to Elizabeth *without a P.*).

BRIDGET.

SIR HAROLD PLYMPTON, BART. (engaged to Miss Carisbrooke *with a P.*).

HARRISON PLYMPTON (Younger Brother of Sir Harold).

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Miss Plympton Carisbrooke's parlor, elegantly furnished. Mrs. Glumm in bonnet and shawl, with bundles in lap, basket and umbrella by side, seated opposite Elizabeth Carisbrooke (without a P.), a handsome, showily dressed girl, who is resting her elbows on the table, her chin on her interlocked fingers, and looking intently at her mother.*

Mrs. G. Well, I don't know what 't is you're driving at, 'Lizabeth. I know I'm masterly proud to see my daughter dressed like a lady, and living among the big-bugs. As I said to Joe Smith (tailor), says I, — I went there to see 'f I could git a patch to mend my

old man's gray trouseys, and says I to Joe Smith (tailor), — Glumm alwiz wears gray trouseys that's hard to patch unless you can git jest the shade, and says I to J. Smith, says I, "It's a good thing when you've got a daughter that can't abide your second husband," — though Glumm's as good a man as ever Carisbrooke was, and a sight pootier —

E. Oh, mother!

Mrs. G. Well, what now? I say Glumm's a pooty man and forehanded —

E. No, but, mother, you did not canvass *me* at the tailor shop, did you?

Mrs. G. Law, no! I did n't know 't you wanted any canviss, or I'd 'a' done it. But as I said, "Glumm's a pooty man, and what sets 'Lizabeth so dead against him I can't see. But 'tis a good thing, says I, that she's got a rich cousin that was willing to take her up when she forsook her —

E. Mother, is it possible that you spoke of my affairs so freely?

Mrs. G. Law, now! I did n't speak of one of your *affairs*. If there's anything I keep mum on it's *suitors*. I only jest said that 't was a good thing Elizabeth Carisbrooke *with a P.* in her name was your own cousin, and was willing to take you up when you forsook —

E. Mother, I must insist upon your not speaking about me in this way to Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Mrs. G. [*chuckling*]. Come, now, I did n't know 't you had so many. I hain't mentioned you to Tom nor Dick, and I don't know what Harry you mean, unless it's that Lord Harry who is engaged to Elizabeth Carisbrooke *with a P.* in her name.

E. Good heavens! Why will you keep throwing that P. in my teeth? Isn't it enough to occupy the position I do? — an unsalaried companion; a ladies' maid without wages; neither servant nor mistress! dressed and fed —

Mrs. G. Well, that now! I'm sure she dresses you well, and there's oysters!

E. What?

Mrs. G. Oysters, you know! And if there's any thing I do love it's oysters. But Glumm he's sorter stingy ef he is forehanded, and clams come cheaper'n oysters, for he can dig 'em himself —

E. Well, mother, if I had a cent in the world I would buy you all the oysters you wanted. But I have not one cent! not one cent! I'm a perfect beggar, living on the bounty of a cousin, born to greater fortune than I only because her mother had the good luck to have a titled and childless aunt, and the wit to name the only daughter after her.

Mrs. G. Well, now, 'Lizabeth, I did as well by you. Lady Elizabeth Plympton don't happen to be my aunt, so I could n't very well put a Plympton into your name. But I did name you after the Elizabeth Carisbrooke who had the Plympton put into her name; and it's a good thing I did, for as I said to J. Smith (tailor) no longer ago than this morning, — I went down there to git a patch for Glumm's gray trouseys. Glumm, he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they are hard to patch unless you can git jest the shade, — and says I to Joe Smith, says I, "It's a good thing when you've got a daughter [*E. rises and walks about*] that can't abide your second husband," says I, — though as I said

before, Glumm's a pooty man, and forehandedder than ever Carisbrooke was, ef he is stingy in the matter of oysters, though that don't signify —

[Enter, R., Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, a dignified and graceful lady, simply though richly dressed in walking-costume.]

E. You took but a short walk, Miss Plympton. Will you go to your room, or shall I take your things?

Miss P. C. Wait a little, Cousin Elizabeth; I have some news to tell you. Good morning, Aunt Glumm. You are here early to-day. *[Pulls off gloves.]*

Mrs. G. Yes, I've jest been down to J. Smith's tailor shop to see ef I could git a patch to match my old man's gray trouseys. Glumm alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they're hard to match unless you can git jest the shade.

Miss P. C. Did you succeed in getting such a piece as you wanted?

Mrs. G. Well no: here's the trouseys *[unrolling bundle. Miss P. C. should stand a little back of Mrs. G., with hand on her chair]* and here's the patch *[showing cloth of entirely different color]*. It won't quite cover, but perhaps I can find something in the house to go with it. J. Smith give me this blue, but it don't look well.

Miss P. C. I think I have something that will match better, although not of the same material, — the remains of a discarded Boulevard skirt. Will it do you any good? *[Crosses over and sits.]*

Mrs. G. Lor, now, that's real clever of you!

Mrs. P. C. Elizabeth, will you please ring the bell? *[E. rings bell.]*

Mrs. G. As I said to J. Smith (tailor) no longer ago than this morning, says I, "Ef you ain't born with a silver spoon in your mouth, it's a good thing to be connected with them that was." [*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. Was ye afther wantin' me, Miss Plympton?

Miss P. C. Take Mrs. Glumm up to the east closet, and see if I have any cast-off article of woollen goods that will match some cloth she has there. [*Speaks aside with E.*]

Mrs. G. That's real clever of you, now. [*Proceeds to roll up bundles.*] And as I said to J. Smith this morning [*to Bridget*], — I went down there, Bridget, to git a patch for my old man's gray trouseys. Glum alwiz wears gray trouseys —

E. For goodness' sake, mother, aren't you ever going to start?

Mrs. G. Yes, 'Lizabeth, soon's ever I've picked up my things. Here, Bridget, you hold my basket and umbril while I put up my specs, that's a good girl. It's a good thing to marry a man that's got rich relations, Bridget, especially ef he ain't forehanded, as Carisbrooke wa'n't. As I was saying to J. Smith (tailor) this morning, says I, a speaking of 'Lizabeth, "It's a good thing when you have a daughter that can't abide your second husband —"

E. Gracious man! Mother, will you ever go and get that cloth?

Mrs. G. It's a petticoat, Bridget, that matches my old man's gray trouseys. Glumm, he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they are hard to patch ef you don't have jest the right shade.

Miss P. C. [*rises and comes down*]. Elizabeth tells

me you are fond of oysters. I will send you some for dinner if you will be so kind as to accept them.

Mrs. G. Well, now, that's clever of you, for Glumm he's sorter stingy about oysters, if he is forehanded. But you see clams come cheaper, 'cause he can dig 'em himself. Howsumever, that don't signify —

Bridget [*yawning prodigiously*]. Will, thin, if this ould leddy isn't enough to thry the patience of the apostles and blissid Vargin, let alone the saints. Will ye come along, mum?

Mrs. G. Glumm's a mighty pooty man, Bridget, forehandeder [*drops bundle and picks it up*] — forehandeder than ever Carisbrooke [*drops umbrella, picks it up*] — than ever Carisbrooke was, Bridget.

B. Give me them things back, mum. There, now! If ye'll be plazed to proceed wid yer progress. Give me that bundle, too —

Mrs. G. Them's my old man's gray trouseys, Bridget. Glumm he alwiz will wear gray trouseys, and they're hard to patch if you don't have jest the right shade. I went down to J. Smith's (tailor's) — [*Exit, L., preceded by Bridget. Voice is heard continuing.*]

E. She's off at last, thank goodness! And now, Miss Plympton, if you will lay off your things before you talk, I think you will feel better. [*Comes down to Miss P. C., who stands R. front.*] Here is a fan, and let me fetch you a glass of water. You look faint from your walk.

Miss P. C. [*crossing to chair, L., stands*]. No, Cousin Elizabeth. I am only excited with the news I have received. Here is a letter from Lady Elizabeth Plympton, announcing that Lord Harry — her nephew,

to whom I was engaged in babyhood — is already on his way to claim his bride. He will be here in ten days.

E. O Cousin Elizabeth! O Miss Plympton! And you will be a lady, then! Lady Elizabeth Plympton Carisbrooke Plympton! Oh, dear, how will you feel? Will you live in England?

Miss P. C. Yes, some of the time. But I am so attached to my old home that I shall never abandon Carisbrooke House. I shall be here a large part of the time, Elizabeth, and you may keep the house and play mistress in my absence.

E. [*aside*]. Of course! Here I must stick while she is presented at St. James's and travels on the Continent. All for not having a P. in my name.

Miss P. C. Here is the young baronet's photograph. It does not bear much resemblance to those I have before received.

E. [*taking card*]. Oh, yes, ma'am! His hair is combed precisely the same. His whiskers are grown longer, that's all the difference.

Miss P. C. Perhaps so, yet it does not seem like the same face to me. There was something frank, open, and candid in Lord Harry's look that was very winning. I miss it here. This is not a good face, Cousin Elizabeth. I almost dread my future. [*Goes up to table and examines album.*]

E. Oh, indeed, Miss Plympton, it does not become you to say so. Forgive my saying it, — you know we are cousins, — but it seems to me that you ought to be so grateful for the great honor conferred upon you, that you would be ashamed to pick flaws in the young baronet.

Miss P. C. [looking up from album]. Because he is a baronet, my good cousin? Indeed, I do not feel that I am receiving any great honor. [Comes down.] Although he bears a title, you know the fortune is mine, and it is only to secure it in the English branch of the Plympton family that Sir Harold takes an American bride.

E. Oh, I never understood it so! I thought it merely a freak of the Dowager Lady Plympton, who left you her money and married you to her orphan nephew because you were named after her.

Miss P. C. No. The property came to my mother from the Wilbournes, rich Liverpool merchants. In order to secure a fortune to the eldest son of her penniless brother-in-law (who succeeded to the title upon the death of her husband, the old baronet), my great-aunt, Elizabeth Wilbourne, Dowager Lady Flympton, asked my mother to name her daughter Elizabeth Plympton, and betroth her to the young baronet, then in his cradle; thus securing to *his* children all the Wilbourne property which was inherited by my grandfather and great-aunt Elizabeth, all of which is *my own*, and would be mine though I refused to marry this penniless lord, whose looks, I must say, do not please me.

E. But oh, the title! I would give a fortune willingly, if I possessed it, to be a lady and presented at court.

Miss P. C. I do not covet the distinction; but I will not break the engagement, even if I could, for so paltry a reason, — that my lover's face is less handsome than it used to be.

[Sighs, and going over to chair, L., sits. *E.* leans

on back of chair, examining photograph, which Miss P. C. holds in her hand.]

E. How can you say that? I think he is just splendid, — the dashing sort of fellow I like.

Miss P. C. 'Tis a pity we could not change places, cousin. But really, I dread this meeting. I think I must run away up to Grandmother Carisbrooke's Vermont farm, wade in the mountain streams, pick huckleberries, make hay, drive home the cows, — anything, everything, to forget the dreadful fate that seems closing around me. I will have nine days of pure enjoyment; on the tenth, don silk and velvet, and receive Sir Harold with all the dignity which becomes a future baroness. [*Rises.*] Meanwhile, Elizabeth, I shall expect you to oversee the preparations for his reception. See that the house is in order, the wine-cellar filled (from his looks I judge that to be important), and enough baked meats on hand to satisfy his English appetite. [*Exit, R.*]

E. Of course! Nothing but work, work, for Elizabeth Carisbrooke *without* the P. I suppose she'll pay me in her cast-off duds. Wonder if she'll leave her Cashmere shawl when she goes to England?

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Same. Curtain rises. Enter, R., Bridget, preceded by Harrison Plympton.*

B. Is it Miss Elizabeth ye was wantin', sir?

H. P. Miss Elizabeth Carisbrooke. Here is my card.

[*B. wipes her hands on her apron, takes the card, looks at it first one side up, then the other, finally speaks.*]

B. Wal, I s'pose ye're another of her fellers.
[*Exit, L.*]

H. P. [*laying hat and gloves on table*]. Really, now, for a specimen of perfect *naïveté*, recommend me to an American serving-maid. [*Sits in chair, R. of table, tipping back and putting thumbs in waistcoat pockets.*] Quite a well-furnished house, this. A pretty landed estate, too. Miss Carisbrooke must have a snug little property of her own, even if Aunt Elizabeth should cut off the entail, though I don't think that can be done. As I understood the will at the recorder's office, in default of issue on the part of either John Wilbourne or Elizabeth, the property all goes to the child or children of the other, without if or therefore. A pretty little spec. Miss Carisbrooke heirs.

[*Enter E., L., very elegantly dressed.*]

E. Sir Harold Plympton, I understand. [*Curtseys deeply.*]

H. P. [*rises, makes flourishing bow*]. The same. Cousin Elizabeth. [*E. starts.*] I presume I may call you Cousin Elizabeth without offence, and I beg that

you will lay aside all ceremony, and just call me Harry, as is, I suppose, according to your American usage.

E. Indeed, sir — Lord Harry —

H. P. Nay, now, my sweet cousin, if I must insist, lord me no lords. I am to you only Harry Plympton, your obedient — [*Kisses her hand. E. snatches it away.*]

E. Sir, you are mistaken.

H. P. What the devil! *Pardonnez-moi!* Ah — that is — pardon me. Probably the vulgar English is more acceptable to American ears than the soft *Parisienne*, because more easily understood. And understand this also, *ma chère*, that prudery is all lost on me. Your coy, Puritanic ways may be thought pretty enough between betrothed Yankee lovers; but be aware, Miss Prim, that I claim not merely a right to kiss your hand, but your lips also! [*Passes arm around waist.*]

E. No, but really — [*H. P. kisses her.*] Oh-h! [*Sinks into chair, covers face.*]

H. P. Deuce take it! what a prude! Elizabeth, this is going too far. Such childish affectation may suit a juvenile game at forfeits, but I came here expecting to find a bride ready and waiting, with her veil in the box, and orange flowers ordered.

E. What! so soon?

H. P. Yes, so soon. Jove! when a girl has been engaged twenty-five years, she ought to be ready to be married, I think.

E. [*bridling*]. I am not twenty-five, sir!

E. Oh, well, I know you are not. That was a slight stretch. But really, Elizabeth, I want this thing settled. Can't we be married to-night?

E. Impossible!

H. P. Why impossible?

E. Why, she has n't *thought* of the wedding-dress!

H. P. Probably not. You have kept her at work on the thousand and one small mysteries of the toilet, that we masculine minds cannot comprehend the use or the need of. But how long will it take you to be measured for a wedding-gown? And if one seamstress is not enough, call in a dozen. I'll trow the stuff is ordered!

E. Indeed, sir, you don't understand the situation. Let me explain it.

H. P. Explain the devil! I tell you we must be married in two days' time.

E. Mercy! I must telegraph to Vermont.

H. P. Telegraph to China for aught I care!

E. You know, sir, that you have come sooner than we expected you —

H. P. I understand that, — and have put you rather about in your preparations. I understand, and will take things as they are. Since I find so beautiful a Hebe [*bows with hand on heart*] in the person of my promised bride, I can put up with small commons and slack attendance.

E. O Sir Harold! If it is I whom you mean by Hebe —

H. P. Whom else should I mean? But I beg that you will not call me Sir Harold again. It is a name I utterly loathe and abhor! I tell you I am Harry, only Harry to you, *ma chère*.

E. I wonder at you, my lord.

H. P. "My lord," again. Is the title so dainty to a

Yankee tongue that one must needs keep it, like a sweet morsel, forever in her mouth?

E. I will call you "Harry" simply, since you command it, but "Lord Harry" seems so much more natural to me.

H. P. Yes, yes, that's to be expected; but do not give so harsh a word as "*command*" to a lover's wish. [*Tries to kiss her.*]

E. Oh, indeed you must not!

H. P. Oh, but indeed I will! [*Kisses her.*] And more! I'll make you give me a kiss yourself, Miss Prude, as you ought in all conscience to have done long ago.

E. [*aside*]. Oh, this is too delicious!

H. P. Now, do you not want to know just what I thought of my prospective bride, from the pictures that have crossed the water and the prim little letters she has sent me?

E. Yes, certainly.

H. P. And do you not want to know what I think of you now, as I see and speak with you, face to face, and no longer as a shadowy presentiment?

E. Yes, indeed I do!

H. P. Well, promise that you'll marry me to-morrow night and I'll tell you the first; give me a kiss and I'll tell you the second.

E. Truly, truly, I cannot!

H. P. [*mutters an oath to himself; then aloud and with affected pleasantry*]. What a very impracticable little person it is! She has only two words in her vocabulary, "impossible" and "cannot." Now, my dainty dear, it will be well enough for you to use those

words after you have got the noose around my neck, and the halter well in hand ; but just at present I *must* have my own way.

E. But why? I can see no reason for such ridiculous haste.

H. P. Fair Minerva! Goddess of Wisdom! listen to my most resistless reasons. You have already remarked that I am come here three days earlier than you expected, but you have not asked the cause.

E. I thought the steamer got in sooner than you expected.

H. P. Sooner than *you* expected, you mean. The steamer on which Lord Harold should sail, as you supposed, and on which he *had* engaged passage at the time Lady Elizabeth's letter was written, is due next Friday.

E. Well, but for mercy's sake, how did you get here, then? Did you come by cable?

H. P. Scarcely! but by another line of steamships which sail from Plymouth alternately with the Liverpool line. I presume you will perceive there must have been some overpowering reason why I should have made the journey to Plymouth, and taken one of those small and inconvenient steamers, when a passage had already been secured and paid for on the large and elegant Liverpool boat, for the slight advantage of three days' time.

E. Indeed I do not see what could be the great necessity.

H. P. Simply this: Lady Elizabeth is lying low with a sudden attack of congestion. Unless I can send her a cable despatch announcing my marriage before she breathes her last, she cuts off the entail.

E. Oh, my gracious! what shall I do?

H. P. [*mockingly*]. What shall I do? Marry me off-hand, fair Miss Dives, and so secure the handsome property to yours devotedly.

E. Oh, if I only dared!

H. P. Dared? Is it, then, so very dangerous and dreadful a proceeding to win a coronet to that graceful head?

E. A coronet? No, no. [*Walking about.*] Lady Elizabeth Plympton! That sounds very nice, doesn't it?

H. P. Oh, very! I am surprised, astonished, that America, which affects to hold rank and title in absolute contempt, should have a daughter who appears to regard both so highly.

E. Oh, I would rather be a titled lady, with my noble hall and retinue of servants, court balls, hunting in the highlands, travels on the Continent in my own yacht—ah! [*laughs*] I did not mean that, exactly, but it must be glorious!

H. P. [*uneasily*]. "Kind hearts are more than coronets," fair coz.

E. [*hastily*]. Yes, I know. "And simple faith than Norman blood." [*Aside, walking about.*] Simple faith? But she does not care anything for this baronet, and I care *so much*! She would break faith with him if she could. She wished I might change places with her. [*Aloud, approaching close to H. P.*] You have not told me what you think of me.

H. P. Nay, fair lady, you were to give me a kiss for that.

E. [*coyly*]. Oh, yes! Well, and what you thought

of—of Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, from her letters you know.

H. P. I did not like her so well as I do now, that's a fact!

E. What? Sir!

H. P. Aha! that shocks you? Well, to tell the truth, I thought you a rather colorless young Puritan; but *now*—see here, you are to marry me to-morrow night for that, you know.

E. What, I?

H. P. Of course. Who else?

E. [*coming to front of stage, aside*]. If I only dared! He is so splendid! And it is his own fault; he will not let me explain, nor take no for an answer.

H. P. [*coming behind her*]. Shall I tell you what I think of this delicious morsel of flesh and blood, which puts her pale photograph to shame?

E. [*moving away from him*]. Do you really fancy me?

H. P. Fancy! That is a weak word. Your own fair face would be fortune enough for any maid, without the filthy lucre that, after all, makes but a paltry setting for such a jewel!

E. Oh, yes, it sounds well for you to say that, who are only seeking me for my money. [*Aside.*] For the money he thinks I have.

H. P. Nay, sweetheart, I would wed thee on the instant, an thou saidst the word, wert thou as penniless as King Cophetua's beggar-maid. [*Takes her hand.*]

E. [*snatching it away*]. You do not mean it!

H. P. [*slipping arm about waist*]. What! does

that surprise my ladyship so? Then she has but a poor mirror. Give me a kiss for my opinion, *ma belle*.

[*E. joins her hands, and kissing the knuckles, touches them to his lips, then runs off, R.*]

Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same. Harrison Plympton, in bridal dress, pacing the room in great agitation.*

H. P. [looking at watch]. How long she delays! Deuce take it! She said she was ready an hour ago. A woman would stop to match her ribbons and the train at the station, I do believe. Jove! if I can only get the fortune secured, my lady may take her own time. Precious little will she see of me after I get the knot tied so it can't slip. [*Enter Miss P. C., R., in plain travelling-dress.*] Aha! what Puritan Abigail have we here?

Miss P. C. Good evening, sir.

H. P. Good evening, my blooming lass. All the better evening since you have come to help me while away the time. [*Yawns in her face.*]

[*Miss P. C. rings the bell, and proceeds to lay aside hat and shawl.*]

H. P. What, a dumb belle, upon my word! But I prefer a bell with a clapper. I would n't try to ring one without a tongue. Ha! ha! a pretty good joke for a man on the eve of matrimony, is n't it? On the very eve of making a marriage belle, I might say. Ha! ha!

How one can *ring the changes* on a belle ! Pretty good pun. Ha ! ha !

[*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. Och, miss, it's yersilf got home ! Shall I call Miss Elizabeth.

Miss P. C. No, Bridget, but please inform me who this person may be.

B. Och, miss, if ye plazes, that's the barrynit, Misther Sir Harold Plympton, sure.

Miss P. C. Sir Harold !

H. P. [*with a flourish*]. Sir Harold, if you choose to call me so ; though from lips as soft as thine, Harry would be the sweeter name, methinks.

B. Will ye be wantin' a cup of tay, miss ?

Miss P. C. No, my good girl. You may go now. [*Sits and leans head on hand.*]

B. Faith, me leddy'll be given the barrynit his walkin' ticket, I'm thinkin' ; and good riddance bad rubbage, says I. [*Exit, R.*]

H. P. Really, fair Abigail, you seem to be more overpowered by the weight of my enormous title than any one I have yet met at Carisbrooke House. If it's because you're not dressed up —

Miss P. C. Excuse me, sir. I wish to be alone.

H. P. Upon my honor, now ! If that is n't about the coolest thing out ! I should think it had been iced, madam ; upon my word I should. However, I take the hint so delicately conveyed, and my *conge* at the same instant ; the more willingly as [*looking from window*]

I see a hand you cannot see that beckons me away ;
I hear a voice you cannot hear that bids me not to stay

Adieu, most unkind Abigail, adieu. [*Exit, kissing hand, L.*]

[*Miss P. C. rises, and walks several times across room.*] This Harold! This my little Lord Harry, the hero of my childhood's romances? It is not possible! How could this brainless profligate write such letters, so tender, yet so sensible and deferential! Yes, the pictured face did not deceive me; he has certainly changed. [*Sits by table and examines album.*] I cannot bind myself to that man to be his slave, bought by a title! No, not to keep my sacred promise will I bow to such a yoke! [*Rises.*] Oh, it was a sinful thing to fetter us in our cradles, to chain my living soul to the dead body of this man — man? No, beast! I will not bear my chain! [*Putting hand to throat.*] It is too heavy! It galls me!

[*Miss P. C. walks about room. Enter Sir Harold in travelling dress, followed by Bridget, R.*]

B. A jintleman to see ye, Miss Plympton, if ye plazes. Shall I be afther makin' some tay for him?

Miss P. C. Yes, Bridget, and I will take some refreshment now, also. I feel worn and faint with my journey.

B. Dade, mum, and ye look fur orl the wurld loike a ghost. Shall I be afther shpakin' til Miss Elizabeth?

Miss P. C. Not now; I think she is entertaining — that — gentleman, and I would not have them disturbed. You may go now. [*Exit B., L.*] Please be seated, sir; I had not observed that you were standing all this while. [*Sir H. bows and presents card. Miss P. C. reads with a scornful smile and returns it. Speaks coldly.*]

Miss P. C. I presume I do not read this correctly.

Sir H. Madam! I beg your pardon! I am Sir Harold Plympton.

Miss P. C. [*bowing*]. So your card states.

Sir H. Then may I ask the cause of my very ungracious reception?

Miss P. C. Whatever the game you are endeavoring to play, you have unfortunately made your move too late, and will find yourself checkmated. The original Lord Harold is already in the field, and I must say he is not so attractive as to render a duplicate desirable. [*Goes down to table and sits.*]

Sir H. Madam, this is impossible!

Miss P. C. [*taking card from basket*]. Here is his card, of which yours seems to be a fac-simile.

Sir H. Am I speaking to Miss Elizabeth Plympton Carisbrooke, the betrothed of Sir Harold Plympton?

Miss P. C. You are. Will you please to be seated? [*Leans on hands and covers face as if overcome with her feelings.*]

Sir H. Miss Plympton, some dreadful imposition has been played upon you. Who it is that has palmed himself off for Sir Harold, I am totally at a loss to conceive; but I think I can establish my identity. Did you not receive Lady Elizabeth's letter of the 11th, announcing my expected arrival in the "Europa" to-day?

Miss P. C. I did.

Sir H. And it contained my *carte de visite*?

Miss P. C. It did.

Sir H. Will you tell me whether the picture resembles me or not?

Miss P. C. It does not.

Sir H. Elizabeth!

Miss P. C. [*opening album*]. If you have any idea of your own features, you must perceive that the veriest child could not be deceived as to your non-identity with the person who sat for that.

Sir H. That? Is that the picture you received in the letter?

Miss P. C. It is.

Sir H. But that is not me at all. That is my brother, Harrison.

Miss P. C. I wish that I could believe you.

Sir H. But you must believe me. Where is the renegade? You say that he was here, in America.

Miss P. C. He is, and in this house. [*Rings bell.*]

Sir H. Well, this is a great mystery! I supposed him in Brighton.

Enter B. Yis mum, the table's all ready, and the tay dhravin' beauthiful. Kitty was jest brilin' a bit o' steak, if it 'ud plaze ye.

Miss P. C. Thank you for your thoughtfulness, my good girl. And will you go now and ask Miss Elizabeth and Lord Harry to come here?

B. I wull, mum. [*Exit.*]

Sir H. I am at a loss to conceive how Harrison could have got over here in this time, nor do I see his purpose in attempting such a mad masquerade. I gave him Aunt Elizabeth's letter to post on the day he left for Brighton. He knew the contents, and that I was expecting to follow it on the next steamer. He certainly could not have expected to marry you and secure the property before my arrival.

Miss P. C. I should think not. At least, he has made no such attempt. Indeed, I have scarcely spoken with him.

Sir H. Really, this is unaccountable !

[*Enter Bridget, L.*]

B. If it plazes ye, mum, I've hunted the mouse over from garret til cellar, and out intil the garding, and I can't find hair nor hide of 'em.

Miss C. P. They have probably gone out walking. Elizabeth was ever fond of a title.

B. Ye need n't be botherin' yersilf ter wait fur thim same, mum, for they hed their tay more 'n a nour ago.
[*Exit, B., L.*]

Miss P. C. [*looking from window*]. There they come ! They have been out driving. Will you tell me whether you recognize that man ?

Sir H. My brother Harrison, by all that's miraculous ! If it's not, I'll sell my eyes for old iron.

[*Enter E. and H. P., L. Stop short in surprise.*]

Sir H. [*rising*]. How now, Harrison ?

H. P. [*with a flourish*]. Happy to meet you in America, Sir Harold. Permit me to introduce to you the lovely Mrs. Elizabeth Carisbrooke Plympton. Ha, ha ! Pretty dodge, was n't it ?

E. Sir Harold !

Miss P. C. Mrs. Plympton !

Sir H. I do not comprehend what dodge you have played, Harrison.

H. P. You don't ? Can't comprehend it yet, can you ? Sort of dazzling to come suddenly upon a fellow after twenty years of wooing. Ha, ha, ha ! Forgive my hilarity ! I forget you don't understand the

joke. Listen, *mon cher frère*, the elder brother, Sir Harold Plympton, Baronet. Ha, ha, ha! Broad lands are more than coronets, and bank accounts than Norman blood! Don't see the point yet? Upon my soul, I see I must explain! When our lady aunt gave me the letter to mail to the fair Elizabeth, the devil entered into me, and he said, "Harry, my boy, why should this elder brother of thine bear away both title and gold? Methinks this is an unequal division. Can't you equalize it?" "I'm with you there, old fellow," says I. "Give me a lift towards my lady's gold, and I'll see that 't is spent in your service." So, my most noble Lord Harry, to make a long story short, I opened the letter, and having made sure of the time at which you would be expected in America, substituted my own handsome visage for that Knight of the Rueful Countenance enclosed therein, as a precautionary measure, to make my welcome more assured. A mistake in identity might have worked disastrously to my interests. Took a night train to Plymouth, engaged a passage on the first steamer out, and behold the result! Mrs. Elizabeth Carisbrooke, at your service. [*Takes E. by the hand, and drawing her forward, bows with hand on heart. Miss P. C. turns to L., sits.*]

E. And you are not Sir Harold? You are not a baronet?

H. P. Nary a baronet. Not until my elder brother dies, fair charmer! Let us pray that his life may be short, since nothing less than a coronet will satisfy you.

E. Yes, but you were married under your brother's name. It was not legal!

H. P. Begging your pardon, I was married under the name of Harry Plympton, which is as much my own as his.

E. But you have deceived me cruelly! You are a shameless impostor! [*Sobs.*]

H. P. Don't call your husband names, pretty one! It is n't becoming. Besides, my dear, it only aggravates the marriage bond. We are married, you know, my duck, until death do us part, and all that sort of thing. Come, make the best of the inevitable!

Sir H. Harrison, there is one grave error that you have committed in your calculations.

H. P. Ah? Enlighten me, if you please. Lady Plympton can't cut off the entail. I made sure of that before coming.

Sir H. The error which you have committed is in marrying the Elizabeth Carisbrooke *without* a P.

H. P. I beg your pardon —

Sir H. There are two Elizabeth Carisbrookes, one is an heiress, the other is not. Elizabeth *Plympton* Carisbrooke, the heiress, sits there. Elizabeth Carisbrooke, *minus* the P., minus also any landed property, is the present Mrs. Harrison Plympton. Do *you* understand now?

H. P. The devil!

Sir H. You are right in ascribing the fault to him. He is not a very safe adviser.

H. P. Deuce take it! Girl! do you mean to say that you have deceived me into marriage with a beggar?

E. [*angrily*]. You deceived yourself, sir! You would not let me explain who I was. You cursed me when I attempted it, and forced me to marry you

against my will. You said [*sobbing*] that you were not wooing me for my money, but would marry me though I were as poor as King C'ophetua's beggar-maid.

H. P. Hell and furies! You could have explained had you chosen!

Sir H. Come, come, my dear brother, you are married, you know, till death does you part, and all that sort of thing. Such scenes only aggravate the marriage bond. Make the best of the inevitable, Harrison.

H. P. Elizabeth, have n't you a pound in the world?

E. [*bitterly*]. Not a penny! Not until my cousin Elizabeth dies. Let us pray that her life will be a short one, since nothing but gold will satisfy you! Forgive me, dear Miss Plympton, but I am so unhappy! [*Flings herself down at Miss P. C.'s feet, and burying face in her lap, sobs bitterly.*]

H. P. [*crossing over*]. Come, come, this won't do, my beauty. For you are a beauty, and I have to thank my blessed stars for giving me a charming witch instead of the old hag I deserved; for I would have married you had you been blind of one eye and ugly as sin. Sin is somewhat ugly, is n't it, my poor jewel? What we are to do with ourselves to-night I don't know. [*Walking up and down.*] I actually have not a shilling; no, not a farthing with which to pay for a night's lodging! And there is to-morrow coming, and next week, and the week after! Have you got any jewels you can pawn, my angel? [*Pausing suddenly before Miss P. C. and E.*]

Miss P. C. Stay! I shall not turn you out into the cold world to-night Nor will I let my cousin leave

Carisbrooke House dowerless. In fact, she shall not leave at all if you [*rises*] are willing to undertake the care of my American estate. [*H. P. bows.*] I had, before this, asked Elizabeth to keep the house during the time I spend in England.

H. P. Miss Plympton Carisbrooke, you make me your eternal debtor.

Miss P. C. Not at all. I am so grateful to Elizabeth for marrying you off my hands, and saving me a fate worse than death, that I would willingly dower her with half my fortune. [*Crosses to Sir H. and slips hand in his.*] And now you will arrange your toilets, while I ascertain if there is cake and wine in the house sufficient to set a decent wedding-table.

TABLEAU. — *Miss P. C. and Sir H. with hands joined, R. ; H. P., L. C., with arms folded, looking gloomily upon E., who kneels with head in chair, L.*

Curtain.

THE DON'S STRATAGEM.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

DAME McALLISTAIR.

KIMMER (neighbor) FEANNIE.

ALISON McALLISTAIR, daughter to Dame McAllistair.

DAVIE McALLISTAIR, cousin to Alison.

KATE CAMERON, a brunette, cousin to Alison.

DON LUIS CAMPEADOR, a Spanish soldier. •

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Interior of Scotch cottage. Table and chair, RIGHT FRONT ; spinning-wheel and chair, LEFT BACK ; closet, LEFT. Dame McAllistair alone.*

Dame. It's blithe I'll be the day that sets on Alison a married wife. It's nocht but rin, rin, Davie here and Davie there, frae the morn til the night. Night, did ye say, Dame McAllistair? Plague on the night, it's waur than the day ; they are over the mountains like foxes and the like, sae soon as the sun sets, and a claverin' like goshawks. There, it's like she's comin' noo, the hizzy ! [*Enter Kimmer Feannie, R.*] Ye're hame early the day, young one.

Kimmer. Hey?

Dame. God preserve's, — it's Kimmer Feannie ! What's the news, kimmer?

Kimmer. Happen Gossip Aileen's in her last sickness, God be thankit! [*Sits.*]

Dame. Weel, aweel, greetin's vain. We maun be resigned.

Kimmer. Jeannie Morrison was cried in kirk last Lord's day.

Dame. Jeannie Morrison! And what gars the flip-pant kite marryin' sae young, and she her mither's only bairn! Gude riddance til her! The mither maun be thankful to get the lazy jaud off her hands, but preserve the man that's gotten her! though I did think ane while 't would be my sister's ane chiel, Willie. He's weel saved a waur fate.

Kimmer. And what'll ye say but 'tis Willie, dame?

Dame. How say ye! Willie McAllistair?

Kimmer. Willie it is, dame. But we maun be resigned, ye ken. Greetin's vain.

Dame. It's a true word ye speak, kimmer, and I'll e'en try to be resigned. Happen Jeannie'll stiddy doon after marriage, and it's nae that small a tocher she'll bring Willie; wi' a stirk or twa and ousen and kye, and happen a placket o' siller forbye. Jeannie was always bonnie, ye mind, Feannie?

Kimmer. Aye, bonnie to them as takes siller for sense.

Dame. I dinna ken what was yere last word, kimmer; but I'll be fain when the truce is o'er, and Davie gaen back til his regiment again. The girl Alison is clean daft whenever he's about, and not worth a doit to her wark.

Kimmer. Ou, aye! What did ye say about the truce?

Dame. I say I wad the truce was over, and Davie back til his regiment, that I might get a lift frae Alison at my wark.

Kimmer. It's like, then, ye hae heard the news?

Dame. What news? Didna I speir at ye and speir at ye, and a' the news I got was of a doited auld woman's ails, and twa feckless chieles' matrimonial intentions, — weel, Jeannie Morrison's na to be sneezed at. Willie might hae gane farther and fared waur.

Kimmer [*rising*]. Weel, ye'll doubtless hear the gret news afore night.

Dame. What news, Kimmer Feannie? Haven't I speired at ye baith high and low? Ane might as weel speir at a dimnock. Ane thing I ken, — it's gude news, ye're so long a tellin' it. Ill news wad 'a' spoiled in yer mouth.

Kimmer. Gude or bad, it's just as ane takes it. But the truce will never be over, for the war's over instead.

Dame [*sinking into a chair and throwing up her hands*]. The war over, did ye say, and Davie on my hands for good?

Kimmer. The war's dune, I say. We hae e'en made it up wi' the King o' Spain, and gin he's satisfied ye ought to be. The toon is joost full o' Spanish men, wi' their big black een a winkin' at the lassies.

Dame. And ye stand there in yere auld shoon, a tellin' me o' the black een o' Spanish men! Oh, help us a'! What shall I do wi' the twa loons on my han's? Whisht! there comes Alison. Dinna ye speak a word o' it til her. [*Enter Alison, R.*] Where hae ye been, chiel?

Alis. [*crossing over and looking out at door, l.*].
Pullin' turnips, mother.

Kimmer. Weel, as I was a sayin' but noo, there's a fair chance to-day for a smart lass to get a braw Spanish lover, gin she —

Dame. Was it the kale ye was speakin' of, kimmer? Gin ye'll step out the door, I'll gie ye a head or twa for dinner. [*Exit, R.*]

Kimmer. I dinna mind, if it's a' the same til ye.
[*Exit, R.*]

Alis. [*turning about*]. Mother!

Dame [*returning*]. What is it, daughter?

Alis. I hear that King George has made it up with Spain.

Dame. Ou, aye, I hae heard it too, daughter.

Alis. And the war's over, mother.

Dame. H'm! That follows in course, chiel.

Alis. And Davie's home for good.

Dame. Ay, Alison, sae it seems.

Alis. Is it all true, think ye, mother?

Dame. That I canna tell. The proof o' the puddin' is eatin' the bag, they say. But Feannie'll be pullin' the kale sprouts for hersel'! [*Exit, R.*]

[*Alis. seats herself at wheel and sings* ('TUNE.
"There's nae luck about the house") :—]

And are ye sure the news is true?

And are ye sure he's weel?

Is this a time to think o' wark?

Can I sit at my wheel?

[*Walks to front of stage; sings:—*]

And will I see his face again?

And will I hear him speak?

I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought;
In truth, I'm like to greet.

[*Enter Davie, R.*]

Davie. Allie, Allie, sweetheart!

Alis. [*confusedly, looking over shoulder*]. Oh, is that you, Cousin Davie?

Davie. Cousin Davie! Ou, aye, it's me, and it's yere cousin Davie. [*Alison turns away, tossing her head.*] The war's over, Alison.

Alis. That news is eight-and-forty hours old.

Davie. Aweel?

Alis. And where have you been since yester morn?

Davie [*approaching*]. That can a' be explained, lass.

Alis. You need not take the trouble.

Davie. Why, Allie, girl, I could na get away all at once.

Alis. And the town has been full of Spanish men these twelve hours. Why could not you get away as well as the Spanish men?

Davie [*sulkily*]. I tauld ye I could na. Gin ye will na believe me, I'd best say nae mair. Ye might na believe my explanation.

Alis. Explanation, indeed! I doubt not Kate Cameron heard the news lang syne.

Davie. And what's that to me?

Alis. I do not ken myself! [*Walking up to him saucily.*] What is Kate Cameron to you, Davie? You ken best yourself.

Davie [*angrily*]. I dinna ken Kate Cameron frae a pickled herring!

Alis. Don't lie, Davie. You once knew Black Kitty of Calloch Frith well enough.

Davie. Oh, Kitty o' the Frith? Aye, but that was lang syne.

Alis. But you do remember her now, Davie? A bonnie lang lass. You used to say she was bonnier than me.

Davie. Vera like. Ye mind she has twa black een. I always doted on black een.

Alis. I thought you did not ken Kate C'ameron from a pickled herring.

Davie [*angrily*]. I hae na seen Black Kitty these sax years, and ye're a fule!

Alis. [*gravely*]. You have not seen Black Kitty these six years, and the ships anchored side by side in Calloch Frith these eight-and-forty hours? And dinner on the ships and in the town, and all the braw lassies in their gay ribbons waiting on the soldier lads —

Davie. Fie, Alison! I had clean forgot that Kate Cameron lived at Calloch Frith.

Alis. Perhaps I'll believe that some day. [*Exit, L.*]

Davie. Plague take the girl! I canna make out what she's aiming at. Kitty C'ameron! Why, now that I think o' 't, I do remember her vera weel. A blithe, black-eyed lass who used to be visiting here and called Alison cousin. Bonnier than Alison she was, in good faith; and I'm much mistaken if she was na the black-eyed wench I threw kisses at on the house-top to-day as we marched through Calloch Gate. But Allie's a fool to be doubting me. Hae na I held to her through peace and war, time and chance, sin' we were toddlin' bairns? I, that could hae the pick o' the lassies baith at home and abroad! There's mony a red-cheeked English damsel that smiled kindly on the

braw Highland lad. For I *am* a braw callant, and nae that badly off for a sweetheart that I need flech and pray at the heels of a sulky jaud.

[*Smirks at the glass, L., and s'a'ks up and down stage. Enter Kate, R., with basket on arm. Stops, looking at Davie.*]

Kate [*aside*]. Faith, but that's a handsome lad! I'll be bound he makes the girls' hearts jigget. [*Advances to table, R., sets down basket.*]

Davie [*turns around. Aside*]. Ye gods of war and love! Here is a black-eyed lass to set off Alison's Kitty Cameron with. Wow! but I'll gie her a reason for jealousy now. Good e'en, bonnie lassie.

Kate [*curtseying*]. Did you speak, sir?

Davie. I did, fair gowan blossom.

Kate. To whom may you be speaking, sir?

Davie. To your own sweet self, dear lassie.

Kate. To me, sir? And what did you say?

Davie. I said that ye were bonnie

Kate. Pshaw! That goes without the telling. Have n't you any fresher news?

Davie. Aweel, the war's over; and though that is auld news, it must be younger than your beauty.

Kate [*aside*]. How nice he is! [*Aloud.*] Where's my cousin, I wonder?

Davie. I'm grieved to say that I don't know who your cousin may be, dear lassie. I'd fain take your cousin's place, though.

Kate [*aside*]. Oh, dear, I wish he were my cousin! [*Aloud.*] But my cousin is a lassie: Alison McAllistair.

Davie. Alison McAllistair! Ye can't be Black Kitty o' the Frith?

Kate. And why can I not, sir?

Davie. But, Kitty, if ye are she, ye must needs ken me; and the more betoken that we were ance wed, — wi' the ring off the ladle handle, daft Sandy Bly acting priest.

Kate. What, Davie! Davie McAllistair! Ye can never be!

Davie. And why can I never be, Kitty?

Kate [*walking forward*]. Oh, Davie, and you have been to the war, and have come back well and unscathed, when many another man has kissed the sod.

Davie. Mony a bonnier and better than I, Kate.

Kate [*confusedly, sitting at table*]. I did not say that. [*Rising.*] Tell me all about yourself, and the broad stripes on your sleeves. [*Sitting.*] Tell me, Davie, how you got them.

Davie [*approaching*]. This one, Kitty, that made o' me a corporal, that is a gay story. We were fortifying the Point o' Dunderhead, and the captain wanted to throw up a wall to protect the hamlet. — between Garrock and Bleak Points, — ye ken the place, Kitty?

Kate. Ay. 'Tis just a bit space.

Davie. Why, yes, a little space perhaps to walk on a sheeny night, wi' a bonnie, bright maiden in the bend o' yere arm, — eh, Kate? But to pace it out in range of a couple o' Spanish brigantines who rattled shot and shell down o'er ye like perdition —

Kate. Hush!

Davie. But it was just that, girl. I was sent out to pace the distance where the earthworks were to be thrown up. The instant I showed myself on the strand the Spaniards opened fire, and rained shot around my

ears like hail on the sheiling. I ran like a goat, and never counted a step. When I reached Bleak Rocks, plague take me if I could hae told gin the distance were a hunder paces or ten thousand. It seemed a lang Scotch mile to me. "Weel dune!" says the captain; "how far do you make it?" What could I say? A lucky thought came to me as I was a getting my breath. "Captain," says I, "gie a guess." The captain squints. "A hunder and fifty yards," says he. "Good for you, captain," says I, "it's a hunder and five and forty." And as it happened, so it proved. So wi' that they pit a stripe on each arm for my service.

Kate. And a brave one it was, light as you make of it, and took a man of courage to go through with. Laugh as you will, *I* think so. And the other stripe?

Davie. Weel, lass, that came through a graver service. Only the night afore last, as the captain, with only my guard, was out looking at a taut smack dashing across the frith all sail set and colors flying, up comes a band o' scurvy black rascals, who were out pillaging and foraging, paying no heed to the truce. Their dirty little boat was anchored at our feet; and whether it was only in spite, or for fun, or out o' conceit that they could make our Camaroch prisoner, they shot the captain's horse and rushed upon us with cutlasses. Our captain fell under his horse. A fellow struck at him with his cutlass; I threw myself between them. Wow! but the blade was sharp, and sliced shrewdly, Kate. Well, I might not hae been here this day, but that the man-o'-war in the offing saw the fracas, fired guns and ran up signals, and the vil-

lains hurried down to their boat and pulled off. The better their haste, good faith! sin' the little sloop bowling before the wind was bringing news o' the peace to Calloch, and their raid might hae been construed into a breach o' faith, and complicated matters between the twa nations. Do ye see?

Kate. But, Davie, were you wounded?

Davie. Only a slice off my arm, lass. It bled enough for twa, and hurt some at the first. Captain Camaroch would hae it that I was disabled in the saving of his life, but our surgeon said 't was a case for the needle, not for the hospital. A needle-case, do ye mind?

Kate. Oh, Davie, how brave you are!

Davie. Pshaw! I scarce feel it now. [*Twisting left arm.*] So I got my stripes and a brand-new uniform; and now, my Kate, I'm sergeant in the regular army.

Kate. Oh, which arm was it? The wound must be worse than you make for. [*Clasps right wrist in both hands.*]

Davie. The other arm, Kitty; but it is quite weel now.

Kate [*rising*]. Well? Are you sure?

Davie [*putting arm around her waist*]. Weel enough to hug a pretty girl.

Kate [*pushing it*]. Hands off!

[*Enter Alison, BACK L. ; stops and gazes.*]

Davie. Wow! be careful! You hurt!

[*Kate sits again, but makes a feint of pushing off his arm. Playful struggle in dumb show.*]

Alis. Oh, I knew it! I knew it when I heard that

the soldiers were feasted at Calloch Frith. But, fool! Where is the difference? Calloch is only a run from Dunderhead, where the troops were stationed. Many's the long evening he's spent at Black Kitty's side, while I could neither sit nor sleep for weeping and fearing for him. And he denied that he knew her! Oh, Davie! [*Approaches and stands at front of stage, looking side-wise at Kitty and Davie.*]

Davie [*leaning on Kitty's chair*]. So that is what delayed me. I should have been here twelve hours gone by, only that I waited for my new uniform —

Alis. [*aside*]. What do I care for a new uniform?

Davie. And the [*Luis knocks at door*] commission.

Luis [*entering*]. Can this cottage afford rest for a wayfaring man who has wandered too far from the town and lost his road?

Kitty and Alis. [*stepping forward*]. Oh! a Spaniard!

Davie [*aside*]. Alison! Good heavens!

Alis. Pray be seated, sir. [*Dusts chair with apron.*]

[*Luis seats himself, after bowing profoundly on all sides. Kitty puts hat on table. Alison brings glass of water. Kitty fetches plate from closet and fills it with cakes from basket. Alison brings grapes and apples from closet.*]

Davie [*striding across stage*]. Deuce take it! I'm nowhere now! Let a man have a mustache and a foreign twist to his tongue, and every woman is ready to fly off wi' him. Oh, by all means, Kitty, feed the monkey wi' your cakes. Ah, cakes are not good enough, Alison must give him fruit! Pah! what absurdity! [*Retires BACK CENTRE, and glowers at Don Luis.*]

Alis. Shall I take your cloak, sir?

Davie. Yes, by all means take his cloak.

Kate. He looks very tired, Alison.

Alis. What's that to you? He's *my* guest, and I'll take care of him.

Kate. You need not be so hot! I doubt I sha'n't hurt him with looking at him.

Davie. Pulling caps over the black rascal a'ready. Where's my wounded arm now? Mayhap this is the very fellow that sliced it. Much does Alison care, though to be sure she does na know. Haughty minx! Gin she would not hear my explanations when I was ready to gie them, she shall wait lang enough to hear them now.

Alis. How handsome he is! What beautiful black hair!

Kate. Troth, he sets off your beauty to greater advantage than that red-headed [*or sandy-haired, as the case may be*] Cousin Davie of thine. Put thy face closer, and thy skin will show whiter.

Alis. [*walking across stage*]. My Cousin Davie! He's as much cousin to every McAllistair in the clan.

Kitty. That's as true as if I'd said it myself.

[*Girls quarrel, LEFT FRONT.*]

Don. What beautiful girls are these that bloom on Scotland's rugged mountains! That black one [*shrugs shoulders*] does n't count. I can find a thousand such in Spain. But the fair one is a jewel worthy of the richest setting my ancient palace can afford. [*Enter Dame, R.*]

Dame. Wha hae ye gotten here, Alison?

maker to attend to this morning, and — (*Enter SPIERS, R.*) Ah, there he comes. You may go now.

MR. SPIERS (*comes to C. and takes LOTTIE'S hand*). Yes, go now, Tim.

TIM (*aside as he goes*). Och, yis, they're moighty fast to say, "go now, Tim," but, for all their shlyness, it's meself knows well what they'll be up to the minute me back is turned on 'em. (*Exit, R.*)

(MR. SPIERS and LOTTIE embrace; he then leads her to a seat beside him on the sofa.)

MR. SPIERS. It did seem as if you would never get down-stairs this morning. But where are your father and Aunt Prue?

LOTTIE. Oh, Aunt Prue is somewhere about. You know she and I have long ago given up trying to keep track of each other. In fact, she has looked upon me as something quite beyond her management ever since that day I went off with you and left her sleeping in her chair.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, yes, I remember about that. How long did she sleep there, do you suppose?

LOTTIE. Sure enough, I never told you about that. As soon as I returned to the hotel, I ran up to the parlor, and there she was just as I had left her. It was dinner-time, you know, so I was forced to waken her. She saw my street dress, looked at her watch, and took in, of course, how basely I had deserted her. Poor auntie, she has merely pretended to look after me ever since.

MR. SPIERS. Well, you are in no danger of not

Luis. Thanks, kind dame. Your tone is kind and speaks to my heart, though the words that fall on my ears I cannot understand. But the language of hospitality is a language common to all nations. It has long since spoken in the eyes of these fair damsels, though their lips were mute.

Davie. Dam sells, indeed!

Dame. Weel, aweel. Fine words butter nae pars-nips. Sit doon and make yersel' ane o' us for the e'enin'.

Kitty [*to Davie*]. Is n't that splendid!

Davie. Oh, yes. Vera splendid.

Dame. Quit ye're bowin' and scrapin', mon, and make yersel' til hame, — as I wish in my heart ye were, fast enough.

Luis. I would that I understood better the words in which your kind heart attires itself, for then could I reply more fitly.

Davie [*crossing stage*]. Not a word o' welcome to her own brother's son and her daughter's promised gude-man, and claverin's and compliments by the cartload to a black Spanish pirate. Alison's head is rarely turned; and as for Kate, I'm fairly sick at her. [*Walks back. Enter Kimmer, R., stands in doorway, hands upraised.*]

Kimmer. Weel, aweel! They've caught ane of 'em.

[*TABLEAU. — Don Luis and Dame bowing and curtsying, CENTRE; Kimmer in open door, hands upraised, LEFT; Kitty leaning on Alison's shoulder, RIGHT, both looking admiringly at Don Luis. Davie in background, drawing pistol.*]

Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same. Enter Davie, RIGHT.*

Davie. I wonder has bonnie Kitty gone the morn. Faith, I've slept no more than a cat, a thinking o' her twa black een the lee lang night! Good luck betide my haste, and grant me anither blink o' sweet Kitty's bright e'en and dimpling cheeks. [*Sound of singing a love song — Spanish if possible — without.*] Wha's that — the Don? [*Song continues.*] O Alison! Alison! false and fair! Inconstancy, thy name is woman!

[*Song ceases. Enter Don Luis, followed by Kitty and Alison, L.*]

Luis. Lovely young ladies, I would that it lay within my humble abilities to make some return for the kindness you have shown an alien, an enemy to your native land. As firm as Scotia's mountains, as deep as her fathomless waters, as warm as her sunny dells. so firm, so deep, so warm have I found the friendship of Scotia's hearts, and lasting as her deathless birch-trees shall be my memory of them. Ah! if in one of these constant hearts I could find an abiding place [*taking Alison's hand*], — if I might believe that a Scottish heath-flower would bloom in Spanish soil!

[*Davie pushes between.*]

Davie. Enough! Who are you that comes here and proposes to transplant a heath-flower in which, I would have you know, sir, I have some interest?

[*Don folds arms and looks down upon Davie.*]

Luis. I am the Don Luis Campeador. Who are you?

Davie. I am the betrothed husband of Alison McAlhstair! [*Kate screams.*]

Alis. Why, no, Davie. Indeed, sir, we are not betrothed — only a sort of an understanding. [*Begins to cry.*]

Luis. Is this the lady who is your bride?

Davie. My bride in the face of heaven and earth! Let him who dare, gainsay it!

[*Kate covers face and retreats to back of stage.*]

Alis. What is *she* crying for? Oh, I knew it! I knew it!

[*Alison throws herself in chair and sobs violently. Luis approaches.*]

Luis. Sweet and dear lady —

Davie [*thrusting himself between*]. Hands off! Coward! [*Luis seizes Davie by shoulder and wheels him off. Davie slaps Don Luis across face with back of hand. Luis draws sword, Davie presents pistol. Don puts up sword and waves hand majestically toward the door.*]

Luis. Let us settle the affair like gentlemen, like brigands. Come, we cannot quarrel before the ladies. Come, sir!

Davie. Ane word, Alison. Are you not promised to me? [*Lays hand on her shoulder.*]

Alis. Let me be, Davie. Oh, dear! oh, dear!

Luis. Fair lady, I kiss your feet! Are you promised to this signor, my very dear friend?

Alis. Oh, I am so wretched!

Luis. My friend, we will settle this simple affair yonder. Come. [*Exit, R.*]

[*Davie looks at girls. Both are crying and do not notice him. Exit Davie slowly, R.*]

Alis. [*raises head*]. Oh, he is gone! [*Looking around wildly.*] Oh, I shall never, never see one like him again! So handsome, so manly, so perfect a gentleman, so noble!

Kate [*angrily*]. To my mind, that black Spaniard cannot hold a candle to your own cousin Davie.

Alis. If you admire my cousin Davie so, why don't you take him and keep him? I don't want him! [*Sobs.*] What did you let him come home at all for? Why didn't you keep him always at Calloch Frith? Great pleasure it gave me to see him! I don't fancy cold scraps after other folk have had the pick of the dish.

Kate. As if I didn't know a jealous woman when I saw her!

Alis. [*rising*]. I'm not jealous! But 't was a lie he told. We are not betrothed. Mother would not let us be till the war was closed. [*Walking about.*]

Kate. Well, the war is closed now, and I suppose you'll hold him to his bargain. Oh, Modesty! I'd be ashamed to show that I cared so much for any man. [*Crosses over.*]

Alis. [*stamps*]. I don't care for Davie! I hate him!

Kate [*crossing back*]. You couldn't! It's not in woman's nature.

Alis. [*crossing over*]. It's in my nature, anyway. I despise him! The little, vain, soft, conceited, selfish—

Kate [*stamping*]. He's not selfish, nor vain, nor conceited, and you do not deserve to have such a cousin! [*Enter Dame, R.*]

Dame. Och, God preserve's all! Here's murther,

murther on the spot. Lassies, what hae ye been doin'?

Alis. Murder, mother?

Kate. Who is murdered, aunt?

Dame. Baith on 'em! Och, wirra, worra! wirra, worra! ochone, ochone! and it's the wark o' ye twa fickle jauds!

Alison and Kate [each speaking to the other]. Now see what you have done!

Dame. Rin and stop 'em, lassies! They'll heed young tongues better than auld, maybe. Rin and stop 'em before waur comes o' 't!

Alison and Kate. Stop them?

[*Pistol shot heard outside. Girls scream.*]

Dame. Oh, it's too late, it's too late! He's dead, he's dead! [*Throws apron over head, and sinks into chair, rocking back and forth, and crying, Ochone, ochone!*]

Kate. Davie! Davie! You've killed him, Alison! [*Leans against wall as though faint with fear.*]

[*Another pistol shot heard.*]

Alis. [*shrieks*]. Oh, Don Luis! [*Rushes out door, R.*]

[*Enter Luis supporting Alison, whose face is covered with both hands, followed by Davie.*]

Luis. Are you satisfied now, my good sir?

Davie. To the victor belong the spoils.

Kate [*raising her head*]. Davie, Davie, are you safe? Are you unhurt? Oh, tell me that you are alive! [*Rushes to Davie, and hangs about his neck.*]

Luis [*laughing*]. Are you now satisfied, sir? That was better than boring one another through with cold

lead. The powder has not been wasted, since the same end is gained, I fancy, which was to make this sweet lady declare her preference —

Davie. No, you are mistaken there, Don!

Luis [*waving hand and shrugging shoulders*]. Still, are you satisfied, my dear friend?

Davie [*kissing Kate*]. Yes, I am satisfied.

Dame. Bless my auld een!

Tableau.

DAME.

LUIS AND ALISON.

DAVIE AND KATE.

Curtain.

ACT III.

[*Strathspey or Scotch reel performed by the actors, according to the fancy of the manager.*]

[The beauty of this play depends upon the costumes, which should be gotten up with as much exactness as possible.]

A PRETTY PIECE OF PROPERTY.

Dramatised from "The Lost Wager."

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS.

MARY WILTON.

MYRA KARL.

SOPHIE WILTON.

MR. KARL.

KATE WILTON.

JARVIS, a Servant.

RUSSEL WILTON, Cousin to the girls.

SCENE I.—*Room with window. Enter Mary and Sophie with arms entwined. Cross to window and stand one on either side.*

Mary [speaking as she enters]. So Russel is gone at last. How we shall miss him! he has kept the house so lively all winter.

Sophie. But we have Katie left. What a witch that child is!

Mary. What a frolic she and Russel keep up! There goes the carriage around the corner. [*Girls wave handkerchiefs.*] Good by to you, cousin!

Sophie. Do you know Katie's last piece of mischief? She has wagered to play a trick on Russel before the week is out. To-day is Thursday.

Mary. How can she, and he a hundred miles away?

Sophie. That is the fun of it. Russ was congratu-

lating himself on getting away from her practical jokes, and she staked her gold chain against his ring that she would play him the worst trick yet by Monday.

Mary. Three days! Trust her to do it. She would be glad to win his ring.

[*Enter Kate laughing.*] I have done it! I have won my wager!

Mary and Sophie. What do you mean, child?

Kate. You see, papa asked me to look over the letter of introduction he had written for Coz to give Mr. Karl. I was all alone in the library, and—I could not help it—I wrote a parody on it. Ha, ha, ha!

Sophie. A parody, Kate?

Kate. Yes. You have heard that Mr. Karl has a beautiful daughter, Myra? Well, I wrote that Russ was in search of a *wife*, instead of a *farm*. Wherever papa wrote “land” or “estate,” I wrote “wife.” Wasn’t it fun! I did not mean the letter to go, really; but I had only just signed it with a great flourish when in came papa with Russel himself, picked up the letter, slipped it into an envelope, sealed it and gave it to Coz right before my face and eyes, and I could not say a word. Oh, my! I have certainly won the ring, and won it so easily. What fun!

Mary. Yes, but lost something worth more. ’T was scarcely politic in you to send Cousin Russel elsewhere to find a wife, Katie.

Kate. What! you do not suppose that Myra Karl, if she has the spirit of a fly, would accept a man who asks for her as he would for a house-lot? Of course she will give him a flat refusal. But I never once thought of sending the letter, truly; I only wanted to

read it to Russ, just to tease him. You need not look so sober, Mary ; I don't care a fig for Russ, — would rather have his ring than his hand, any day. Sophie is the one to feel disturbed, she has tried to get him so hard. [*Bell rings.*] There's the tea-bell.

Sophie. I, Katie ! What do you mean ?

Mary [*aside*]. Oh, I can see through a knot-hole if 'tis big enough. As you saw no way of getting Russel's hand, you tried for his ring, ah ?

Kate. Oh, pshaw ! I tell you, Mary, I don't care for Russ. [*Exit girls.*]

Music.

SCENE II. — *Mr. Karl's parlor. Table with books, two chairs. Enter Mr. Karl with visiting card and letter, servant following.*

Jarvis. Shall I show the gentleman up, sir ?

Mr. Karl [*sits and reads letter*]. Ah, from my old college chum, Wilton, as I live. Remarkable change in his handwriting, but time alters us all. Haven't heard from him for twenty years. Well, well, a cool request, upon my word ! Nephew wants a wife, and has heard I have a pretty daughter with lots of money. Wants me to aid him with my well-known experience in such matters. What does the rascal mean ? *Jarvis !* [*Yes, sir.*] Go kick the impudent young rascal out of the house. [*Yes, sir.*] No, stop a bit. [*Yes, sir.*] Need n't be in such a hurry. I'll see what Myra says. An excellent family, those Wiltons. This letter is just like Job Wilton ; he had singular notions. always.

Rather hard understanding such matters, but there is nothing like a dash of originality in this world. If the boy is rich, and Myra has no objection — might as well see him. Jarvis, show the young gentleman up.

Jarvis. Yes, sir. [*Exit. Re-enter with Russell W.*] Mr. Wilton, sir. [*Exit.*]

Mr. Karl. Happy to see you, Mr. Wilton. Take a seat, sir.

R. W. I have thought some of settling in this vicinity, Mr. Karl, and my uncle telling me that you had a valuable piece of property you might feel disposed to part with, I have called to see it.

Mr. K. [*aside*]. Piece of property! Really, sir, this is a very strange request. One can hardly be expected to answer definitely on so short notice.

R. W. Certainly not; I have no wish to hurry you. Still, I am rather anxious to see it for myself. If you will favor me with a brief description of the prominent features of—

Mr. K. What do you mean, sir? What do you mean?

R. W. Why, sir, it is best not to be too precipitous in a matter of so much importance. As its present owner, you know its chief merits.

Mr. K. [*aside*]. If this is a fair specimen of the rising generation, they are about as impudent a set of jackanapes as I want to see. But I owe something to my long friendship with Job Wilton; I won't turn the puppy out of door yet awhile.

R. W. I suppose it is healthy.

Mr. K. What's healthy?

R. W. Your property. Sometimes on these low

grounds diseases are apt to prevail. I wish to be cautious in my selection.

Mr. K. [starting up]. Do you think Myra has the fever and ague? [*Walks across stage*]. I'll send my daughter to you, young man; that will settle the business at once, sir, at once. [*Exit.*]

R. W. Well, the manners and customs of this locality are rather odd, to say the least. I came to consult an old gentleman about purchasing land of him, and he bounces out of the room and sends his daughter. What on earth I'm to say to her, I'd like to know. I hate strong-minded, business women.

[*Takes up a book and reads. Enter Myra. Stands looking at him.*]

Myra [aside]. What an idea! To be put on exhibition like one of papa's prize oxen! He has a splendid mustache.

R. W. [looks up, throws down book. Aside]. She does n't look strong-minded.

Myra [aside.] Beautiful Spanish eyes. [*Sits down, blushing.*]

R. W. [glances at her]. Really, quite pretty and modest. Hem! Very fine weather we are having, Miss Karl.

Myra [archly]. Yes, sir. Only it is threatening rain, and quite windy.

R. W. Ah, yes! I believe you are right. Your father has a fine place.

Myra. I think so. Oh, there is a lovely cedar grove on the knoll across the river. Father wants to sell it. It's too bad, 't is so beautiful!

R. W. I may wish to become the purchaser. I

think I will look at it. Your father has told you that I have an idea of settling here?

Myra [confusedly]. Oh, yes, sir! oh, yes! he has told me so. [A long pause.]

R. W. Will you mention to your father that I will call to see him about this matter to-morrow morning, Miss Karl? [Rises.]

[*Myra jumps up and runs from the room in confusion.*]

R. W. Very singular family. I can't understand them. But she is an uncommonly pretty girl, though so bashful. I shall certainly take an early morning walk through that grove of cedars to-morrow, and judge of her taste. [Exit.]

Music.

SCENE III. — *Same.* Enter *Mr. Karl*, followed by *Russel Wilton*.

R. W. Yes, sir, I have seen the property in question, and am perfectly delighted. A fine, healthy investment; no disease about it, I should judge. But then, it is not what I call *low*. I would be pleased to take a second, more thorough inspection, in your society, sir, if you please.

Mr. K. Really, Mr. Wilton, my daughter has not come down stairs yet.

R. W. [aside]. What has his daughter to do about it?—Of course I will wait a convenient time for you, sir. I noticed considerable natural roughness, but I presume there is susceptibility to improvement. A

little judicious cultivation will doubtless accomplish wonders.

Mr. K. [*angrily*]. Let me tell you, young man, that I consider my —

R. W. [*aside*]. What a touchy old fellow! I am determined, sir, to secure this rural gem at any price. What is the sum you ask?

Mr. K. Upon my word, you talk as if this was a mere matter of business. What *sum* do I ask?

R. W. That is the way I have heretofore been accustomed to treat such affairs, sir.

Mr. K. Heretofore! You have been accustomed! And pray, sir, how many such little affairs have you had on your hands?

R. W. Oh, several. I am not so inexperienced as you suppose.

Mr. K. Aren't you ashamed to confess it, you puppy?

R. W. No, sir; why should I be?

Mr. K. Get out of my house, you young reprobate! To come here and offer to buy my daughter as if she were a patch of potatoes? Clear out, I say! Come, start!

R. W. Your daughter, Mr. Karl?

Mr. K. Yes, my daughter, you young jackanapes.

R. W. But I'm not bargaining for your daughter, Mr. Karl; I'm bargaining for that land across the river.

Mr. K. Oh, yes, a fine story. But let me tell you that your uncle's letter has informed me of your atrocious designs.

Mr. K. Will you allow me to see the letter, sir?

Mr. K. [*pulls letter from pocket and throws to R. W.*]. Read that, sir. [*R. W. reads and laughs.*] It is no laughing matter, not at all!

R. W. We are all the victims of a ridiculous mistake, Mr. Karl. My uncle never wrote this letter. 'Tis the work of my mischievous Cousin Kate. The genuine document must have been left behind.

Mr. K. And you did not come to look for a wife?

R. W. I came to purchase real estate.

Mr. K. What! Here's my hand, boy! I'm heartily ashamed of the opprobrious names I have called you. But Myra and I thought you were after her, and I didn't like your manners. Here comes the little minx; I must go tell her what a blunder I've made.

[*Enter Myra with flowers in her hand. Stops, embarrassed.*]

R. W. Stay, sir. Will you allow me to make the necessary explanations myself? Perhaps, having selected a home, I may enter into business-like negotiations for a charming young wife to preside over it, and the same person may furnish both home and wife, if he will.

Mr. K. As you please, my lad; I give my consent. [*R. W. approaches Myra.*] That will atone for my villanous treatment awhile ago. Ha, ha, ha! a good joke as I ever heard. Fine-looking young fellow, too; Myra must fancy him.

[*Mr. Karl rubs his hands and walks up and down stage, watching Wilton and Myra, and uttering delighted exclamations. Wilton talks in dumb show, and taking flowers one by one, arranges them in her hair. Myra retains the last, which she fastens in his button-hole. He leads her to Mr. K.*]

Mr. K. Well, my lad, what does she say?

R. W. She says, sir, that she has no serious objections.

[Myra pulls away her hand and runs off stage.]

Mr. K. Here, you witch; why don't you ask your pa's consent? *[Exit.]*

R. W. [soliloquizing]. Well, Cousin Kate, you have fairly won your wager. Hope you will enjoy the wearing of my ring, and be pleased at the successful termination of your little joke. I feel perfectly satisfied. *[Exit.]*

Music.

THE LOVER'S STRATAGEM.

A PARLOR PLAY IN SIX SCENES.

CHARACTERS :

SQUIRE HINSDALE A rich bachelor.
ROWLAND His nephew, just from college.
NATHALIE GWYNNE A cottage-girl, Rowland's sweetheart.
MOTHER GWYNNE Grandmother to Nathalie.
STELLA MURDOCH An authoress.
MADGE Maid to Stella.

SCENE I. — *Parlor at Hinsdale Hall. Stage set with two entrances. Mr. Hinsdale and Rowland discovered, reading, at opposite sides of stage.*

Squire [throws down paper, yawns]. ROWLAND, what a life we are leading here !

Row. [laying down book.] It is both quiet and pleasant, uncle. [*Resumes reading.*]

Squire. Pleasant ! Quiet ! I say, Rowland, look at me !

Row. You are looking finely this morning. I never saw you appear better. Your countenance is as smooth and fresh as at sixteen. I believe it is your continual flow of benevolence, and habitual good humor, that —

Sq. Bah ! haven't you eyes ? I say, look at me ! [*Row. flings book on table, and yawns.*] Can't you see how withered I am ? Old before my time ?

Row. Withered, uncle ! Not a bit. You weigh

more to-day than ever before in your life. Three hundred, if you weigh a pound. [*Laughs.*]

Sq. Bloated, boy, bloated! I'm an unhappy, miserable old fellow. [*Rises and walks about stage.*]

Row. [*laughing.*] Miserable! You!

Sq. [*standing opposite Row., with hands under coat-tails.*] The consequence of living all my days a bachelor! You see how bitterly I repent it, don't you? Of course you do; you cannot help it; and I advise you to take warning by my unhappy fate. [*Row. laughs.*] It is no laughing matter, and I desire you to be serious, for, mind you, Rowland, I have taken it into my head to marry you off!

Row. [*surprised.*] Sho!

Sq. Astonished, are you? It is full time your condition was bettered.

Row. Why, uncle, how can it be bettered? Living in the sunshine of your bounty, I am perfectly contented.

Sq. Are you? Well, I am not! [*Walks about stage.*] Look you! what good is it to me to keep you here, indulging you in idleness? It is no comfort to me, but I mean you shall be. You shall get married; you shall bring a young and handsome wife home to the Hall. We want some one to make music for us,—some one to wake the dusty echoes with her merry laugh,—some one to cheer these old rooms with her sparkling eyes, to make the whole house light and bright with the radiance of her smiles. [*Row. laughs.*] What now? [*sharply.*]

Row. O uncle! You are so romantic!

Sq. [*sits down heavily.*] Romantic! I don't know

as I ever was so sensible in my life. I am in good earnest, at any rate. I say you shall get married!

Row. That I will.

Sq. And I have picked you out a wife.

Row. No!

Sq. Yes, I have.

Row. Whew! Really, Uncle Hinsdale, I think, by good rights —

Sq. I ought to choose for you! Now, see here! you care no more for one woman than another; then let my experience and taste dictate. You will admire my choice. In the first place, I have looked for beauty. Of course you desire your wife beautiful?

Row. Yes, and —

Sq. And spirited?

Row. Certainly, provided —

Sq. And intelligent?

Row. Of course, but —

Sq. Talented and rich!

Row. Oh! as to that, I do not think wealth of consequence.

Sq. Then leave my house this instant! If wealth is of no consequence to you, I will make some one my heir who can appreciate its benefits.

Row. But in a wife —

Sq. Gold never comes amiss. Get a rich wife, if you can; if you cannot, that alters the case. Now the lady I have chosen possesses all these excellent qualities — beauty, spirit, intelligence, accomplishments, talents — and is — rich! [*Row. walks about stage.*] What more could a happy fellow wish?

Row. A little love.

Sq. If you cannot love Miss Stella Murdoch you are not capable of loving any woman.

Row. [*stops aghast.*] Stella Murdoch!

Sq. [*rising.*] She is the woman to make you a good wife. [*Rubs hands.*] She will have you; go and offer yourself as soon as you please. Despatch! [*Exit, L.*]

Row. [*walking back and forth.*] Marriage! and to Miss Murdoch! It is terrible! terrible to contemplate! No, no. [*Strikes forehead.*] I'll elope with Nathalie first. But then that won't do; uncle would never forgive me. If I had the least bit of property I could call my own, it would be a different thing. But to disobey Uncle Hinsdale would be to turn myself out of doors. That would be far from bettering my condition. Still, I cannot give up Nathalie! I must pretend to please uncle, and find some means of escape. Marry Miss Murdoch! [*Shrugs shoulders.*] Never! [*Exit, R.*]

CURTAIN.

SCENE II. — *A room in Mother Gwynne's cottage. Enter L. Nathalie, with flowers. Flings straw bonnet on table, and, leaning against it, shakes her forefinger at Rowland, who follows.*

Nath. You have looked so sober all the while we were gathering the flowers. Now I will play father confessor to you. Come, commence.

Row. [*bending one knee.*] Father, dear father, I've come to confess.

Nath. Well, child, well.

Row. [*suddenly.*] To speak the truth, fair confessor, my reason for calling this morning was to tell you — that I am — going — away, and I shall not see you again — until to-morrow.

Nath. Oh, how you startled me! It sounds so solemn, — I am going away. I shall not see you again. But, until to-morrow, changes it entirely. You will tell me where you are going, of course.

Row. Would you think it? Uncle has determined I shall marry, and I am going to court Miss Stella Murdoch. You have heard of her, perhaps. She comes to our church sometimes.

Nath. Why, Rowland, what jest are you having?

Row. It is no jest. I am in earnest. There is nothing out of the way in my courting Miss Murdoch, is there? I shall pay her my addresses and offer her my hand. Ah! what is this, — my Nathalie in tears?

Nath. [*hiding her face.*] Oh, you have been very kind, — like a brother to me; and when you are married — and bring a — a wife — to the Hall — I shall have no one to read to me any longer. [*Goes hurriedly across the stage and puts flowers in brown pitcher on shelf, R.*].

Row. [*following.*] Nathalie, dear Nathalie, is this all? Say you love me, Nathalie; that you would die of jealousy if I should marry Miss Murdoch. [*Takes her hand, she withdraws it.*]

Nath. Mr. Rowland, I never thought you would trifle with any one's feelings in this way. [*Covers face and sobs.*]

Row. Nathalie, darling Nathalie, forgive me. I had no intention of trifling with your feelings, for I

love you. My heart is yours, my whole life at your command.

Nath. Ah, what can I believe? You contradict yourself. If you love me, how can you offer yourself to Miss Murdoch?

Row. I love you to please myself. I offer myself to Miss Murdoch to please my uncle.

Nath. [*comes down.*] I thought you were a man of principle and honor.

Row. [*following.*] You misunderstood, Nathalie. I shall offer myself to Miss Murdoch, for I *must* obey my uncle. [*Nath. sighs and moves off.*] But I swear never to marry unless—[*falls on one knee and possesses himself of her hand,*] your hand, Nathalie, is the reward of my true love. You or no one, Nathalie, darling, shall be my wife. Dearest, shall not this sweet reward be mine?

Nath. [*smiles and places both hands in his.*] Dear Rowland, I am yours. [*Row. kisses hands and rises.*] Yet to me you speak in riddles. [*Sighs.*]

Row. To be plain, then, sweetheart, my uncle's will is a rock of adamant to me. He orders, and I must obey. So there is nothing left for me but to offer myself to Miss Murdoch. She will refuse me. Then I am free, and by degrees I can bring Uncle Hinsdale to think more favorably of you.

Nath. But this fair lady may not refuse you.

Row. Depend upon it, she will.

Nath. Ah, how can she!

Row. [*places arm around waist and crosses stage.*] Little one, I shall not woo her as I do you.

Nath. But if you should forget that you were ad-



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

BELLA *The young lady hostess*

LOU

ELLA

MARY

EMILY

GRACE

JULIA

FANNIE

Young ladies, residents of the same town and acquainted with each other. They are also Bella's guests.

COSTUMES.

Any tasteful dresses that may be suitably worn at a small evening party. Hats and wraps are worn on entering. The latter should of course correspond with the season, and are to be laid aside at the proper time.



[*Sighs and covers her face with one hand.*] But, oh! I love him so I cannot give him up. But suppose I have to; suppose he fails, and Miss Murdoch accepts him. Oh, dear! [*Sits lost in thought. Without.*] Nathalie! Nathalie! [*Enter grandmother with big basket.*] Nathalie, child!

[*Nathalie springs up, drops her book, and comes down, R. Grandmother picks up book, setting basket on table.*]

Grand. What have you here, a book?

Nath. [*aside.*] Oh! I forgot the book!

Grand. Has the young Squire been here this morning? [*Nath. hangs her head.*] Child, child! [*Grand. sinks into chair, L.*] You'll bring my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave! What do you expect, a rich young man like him, heir of Hinsdale Hall, caring for a cottage girl like you? You are crazy, crazy. And so am I, to let this thing go on! I'll send you off. I'll go now! [*Starts up. Nath. crosses stage.*]

Nath. But, grandma, won't you tell me where you'll send me first? Maybe I'll not want to go.

[*Grand. comes down L.*]

Grand. Not want to go, you huzzy! Not want to go! I'll tell you where. I'm going to ask the Squire to get you a place as waiting-maid to some fine lady.

Nath. [*clasps her hands.*] O, grandma, grandma!

Grand. And why not, pray? Now there is Miss Murdoch, at the Oaks —

Nath. Oh! [*Aside.*] I must coax her a little. [*Aloud.*] I would not go this morning, grandma; it is a long walk to the Hall. Wait until afternoon.

[*Comes to untie her bonnet strings.*] Hadn't you better?

Grand. [*sinks into chair.*] Yes, I will, for I am tired. My walk was long for my old legs.

Nath. [*taking off her bonnet and red cloak.*] Grandma, what would you do without your little Nathalie? Who would pick your cherries and cress, and hunt your eggs, if I was gone away? Who will do up your caps, now your eye-sight fails you so? Ah! mother! [*pats her under her chin.*] I know you'll not be sending away your little one. You was only in fun, wasn't you?

Grand. Well, well; we'll see about it. My marketing bothered me, child, and that made me cross. [*Rises and goes to table. Nath. takes bonnet and cloak out R., carrying off book.*] What shall I do with that child? Nathalie!

Nath. [*stepping back into room.*] Yes, grandma.

Grand. One thing is certain. You don't see young Hinsdale any more; now mind that! There, take away the things.

Nath. Yes, grandma. [*Exit, R.*]

Grand. [*fussing among packages in basket.*] That child does with me just as she pleases. H'm! H'm! But I will not have her seeing that young Squire so much. [*Enter Nath.*]

Nath. Why do you hate Mr. Rowland so, grandma?

Grand. I don't hate him, child; but I say he's not a fitting one to be hanging around here so much. I've nothing against him but his high birth —

Nath. And that he can't help, grandma.

Grand. It is all well enough, unless he begins making love to you, child; but that I will not have.

Nath. [*taking basket.*] I'll make you a cup of tea, presently. [*Exit.*]

Grand. No, I won't have the Squire making love to his little foster-sister. She must go away. I'll start her now. [*Crosses stage.*] Dear, dear, what can I do without her? I'll wait a bit till I get rested. [*Sits, R.*] I'll wait till she's drawn the tea. Dear child, the cottage would be lonely without her. I'll let matters stand awhile, and see how they work. Hurry mars more than it makes.

CURTAIN.

SCENE III.—*Miss Murdoch's sanctum. Table, floor, and chairs strewn with books, manuscript, etc. Madge dusting. Window with long curtains, R. Entrance, L.*

Madge. Mercy! what a clutter! I wish that I might sweep up a bit. I'll just tidy the table. [*Looks over manuscript.*] I wonder what Miss Stella is writing now? Something or other about the trees, and the moon, and how somebody is in love with somebody, and somebody else is in love with the same somebody — Gracious! If there she isn't coming now, reading her new piece of nonsense. I'll hide, and find out which was the somebody that somebody loved.

[*Madge hides in long window curtains, leaving feather duster lying on table. Miss S. enters with manuscript in hand. On her right forefinger is*

painted a conspicuous black stain. As she recites, she stands by table, and mechanically grasps duster, waving in gesticulation, at which Mudge peeps out and laughs. Her hair and dress are in disorder.]

Miss S. [reads] :

“ Love in itself is very good,
But 'tis by no means solid food;
And ere their honeymoon is o'er,
They'll find they wanted something more.”

That is just what I wanted. Beautiful, beautiful! How finely I am progressing. I hope no one will disturb my writing this afternoon. With the Countess of Winchester I would feign implore:—

[Recites.]

“ Give me, O indulgent Fate,
Give me, yet before I die,
A sweet, but absolute retreat,
'Mong paths so lost, and trees so high,
That the world may ne'er invade
Thro' such windings, and such shade,
My unshaken liberty.”

But this will not finish my poem. Ah! yes! My poem! In the second edition of my book,—ahem! that is, when the poem is written and the first edition sold,—I shall have a lithograph of myself, that the world, in seeing it, may say, “Gifted and worshipped one, genius and grace play in each motion, and beam in thy face.” *[Sits and looks over manuscript.]* Let me see; where was I? Oh! Susaline Jeannette Abigail Marie Dickerson is about to answer Alphonso Goöthe James John Gerry, who is down on his knee. *[Tosses head.]* I'd never marry a man who did not go down on *both* knees before me.

Madge [*peeping out*]. Do you hear her? And she'd jump at the chance if anybody would offer.

Miss S. [*reads*]:

Love! O young love!
Why hast thou not security? 'Thou art
Like a bright river on whose course the weeds
Are thick and heavy. Briars are on its banks,
And jagged stones and rocks are 'mid its waves.

[*Writes.*] Susaline must blush. "O'er pallid lip, and cheek, and brow, rush up the burning flood." Then Alphonso Goëthe says, "Oh thou resplendent one, whose —"

[*Madge rushes in.*]

Madge. There's a man, a young man, just a-coming up the avenue, all dressed up, and you look so. Let me fix you up a little. [*Runs and looks out of window.*]

Miss S. A man! and what of that? Are men so scarce that we should gaze at them like gaping fools at some low juggler clown?

Madge [*fetches well-worn comb and brush from window-seat*]. O Miss Stella! Do stop your nonsense, and let me make you look like other folks. [*Pulls out hair-pins, letting hair fall over Miss S.'s shoulders. Miss S. rises abruptly.*]

Miss S. Fair looks are naught, and decorations vain.

Madge. But common decency is something. Come let me fix your hair. [*Tries to draw her into chair. Miss S. comes down stage, flinging hair back from her face.*]

Miss S. Let my hair be. When young men call, they call on me, not on my hair.

Madge [*arranging her dress*]. But they — [*Aside.*] What shall I do? [*Aloud.*] They 'd like — [*Bell rings.*] Oh dear! there's the bell. You sit down; I'll run tell the footman to have him wait till I dress your hair.

Miss S. [*in a stately manner.*] Go and admit the gentleman at once.

Madge [*aside*]. Well, she 'll just spoil her market. [*Exit, L.*]

Miss S. It will never do to be caught in a flurry. [*Sits at table, in a musing attitude.*] I must appear to be composing poetry. [*Poses with pen-handle on lip.*]

Madge [*entering*]. It is young Mr: Hinsdale. [*Presents card.*]

Miss S. How do you know who it is, Madge?

Madge. I saw him at church last Sunday. [*Aside.*] Ahem! it's a pity if I can't read, brought up in this literary confusion. [*Draws back hair.*] Do let me fix you some before you see him. [*Miss S. flirts her hair out of maid's hands.*] You don't know what a nice young man he is.

Miss S. Silence! Go and invite the gentleman up. [*Exit Madge, L.*] Young Mr. Hinsdale, just from college. He shows his taste in coming here. They say he's very learned.

[*Enter Madge; announces*]: Mr. Hinsdale.

[*Enter Row., with hat on. Stands and stares around with open mouth. Miss S. motions him to a seat. Row. follows her motions with his eyes, and remains standing.*]

Miss S. Good morning, Mr. Hinsdale. You honor

us in calling at the Oaks. You will excuse me if I write one word, and finish my sentence, as you know how great the difficulty if an author pauses with a line but half complete. [*Writes a moment, then lays down her pen.*] My task is finished. Pray be seated, Mr. Hinsdale. [*Rises and motions him to a chair.*] I make it a point to write six hours a day. I secure the time by rising at three in the morning. Madge, hand the gentleman a chair.

[*Row. looks at chair. Takes off hat, and looks as though he would put it in seat of chair. Then sits down and holds hat.*]

Miss S. Madge, take the gentleman's hat.

Row. No consequence; I can hold it.

Miss S. No, indeed! Madge, take Mr. Hinsdale's hat.

[*Row. reaches out awkwardly, and drops it. Madge giggles as she picks it up.*]

Row. I said it was of no consequence. I could hold it.

Miss S. Madge, leave the room. [*Exit Madge. Miss S. sits.*] Did you not find the walk delightful? A lovely path, through a green-sward wagon-way that, like a cathedral aisle, completely roofed with branches, runs through the gloomy wood, having at either end a gothic door, wide open. Oh! Don't you love the woods, where one can see the wond'rous hand of nature writing everywhere?

Row. I never saw anything writing in the woods. [*Silence. Row. plays with handkerchief.*] I can't say that I do like the woods very well. I'm always frightened for fear I shall see a snake.

THE BLUE-GLASS CURE.

BY G. B. BARTLETT.

DR. VIOLET, *dressing-gown, blue spectacles.*

THE CRIPPLE, *very ragged suit, crutches.*

JULIETTA CROOKNECK, *walking dress, hat, arm in sling.*

MR. D. F. POST, *overcoat, stylish hat, huge ear-trumpet.*

JOSEPH CRUIKSHANKS, *dress coat, light pantaloons.*

MR. PILGRIM, *short cloak, under which is a large pillow.*

MRS. ST. VITUS, *old cloak and wig, concealing a rich silk dress.*

Any room, with table covered with books, stuffed chairs, one sheet blue glass. DR. VIOLET is seated at the table waiting for patients. A ring is heard, and he suddenly pretends to be very busy. The cripple hobbles slowly in, and is received with disdain by the doctor, who says:

Well, sir, what do you want?

Cripple. O, doctor, I am very badly off — a cripple for forty years. I have tried everything, but, alas, have found no relief.

Dr. Have you ever tried blue glass?

Cripple. No, but I have tried the contents of many.

of poetry? Poetry is the only thing I think or read of —

“Feeding my soul upon the soft, and sweet,
And delicate imaginings of song ;
For as nightingales do upon the glow-worm feed,
So poets live upon the living light ”—

Row. [*yawns.*] That don't seem to rhyme anywhere.

Miss S. I see you do not enjoy poetry.

Row. [*earnestly.*] I don't know. I used to like it when I was a little chap. I remember there was one piece —

“When I was a little boy, my mammy kept me in ;
Now I am a great boy, I'm fit to serve the king.
I can handle a musket, I can smoke a pipe,
And I can kiss a pretty girl at ten o'clock at night.”

[*Smacks lips, and draws hand across mouth.*]

Miss S. [*contemptuously.*] You are one of those, I see —

“Who scorn the lowing cattle,
But burn to wear a uniform,
Hear guns, and see a battle.”

Row. Yes, hear guns! I like that. How would you like to stand in a battle, Miss Stella, and have a big cannon-ball come booming along, and knock the fellow side of you to kingdom come, and spatter his brains and things all over your uniform?

Miss S. Horrid!

Row. I wish you'd say that piece about hearing guns again, Miss Stella; I liked that. [*Distant thunder.*] Gracious! You don't suppose there is a tempest coming, do you?

Miss S. [*goes to window*]. I think there is. A dark cloud seems to be rising, and the tall, sweet primrose bends its head as if it felt the omnipotent and deep-breathing air.

Row. [*rising*]. Why! Don't you feel frightened in a storm?

Miss S. [*scornfully*]. Frightened? No! [*Comes down, &c.*] To me there is something glorious, sublime, in the dark, towering tempest-cloud, as it comes rolling up and darkens the far horizon. [*Thunder.*]

Row. Oh!

Miss S. [*aside*]. A brave soldier, truly! As Festus says —

“Thunder is but a momentary thing;
Like a world's death-rattle, and like death.
Lightning, like the blaze of sin, can blind
Only and slay.”

[*Thunder very near.*]

Row. Oh! dear! Oh! dear! [*Walks back and forth.*]

Miss S. [*looking from window*]. —

“Cloudy and shapeless first, forms on the mind,
Slow darkling into some gigantic make.
How the heart shakes with pride and fear,
As heaven quakes under its own thunder.”

[*A flash of lightning, followed by thunder.*]

Miss S. Glorious! It has struck the opposite tree!

Row. [*trembling*]. Horrible! We shall all be killed.

Miss S. The tempest comes quickly. How sublime, how grand! [*Sudden and heavy shower of rain.*]

Row. [*crouches down in chair*]. Had n't you better come away from that window, Miss Murdoch? It's

dangerous to — [*Lightning and thunder, followed by wind and rain.*] Oh! dear! I wish I was at home. [*Wind dies away, rain comes in gusts.*] Oh! dear, me!

Miss S. [*turns from window*]. The cloud will soon pass over. It has almost stopped already. [*Rain heard.*]

Row. I shall get dreadfully wet going home. Do you suppose [*anxiously*] I shall catch cold?

Miss S. [*aside*]. Great baby! [*Aloud.*] I will send the carriage with you. [*Slow drops of rain.*]

Row. Thank you; that's awful kind, you know, for the trees will be full of drops, and I'm not used to going out in the wet. Do you think the storm has passed over? I will go now, if you don't mind being left alone. Before it begins to thunder again, you know.

Miss S. The storm has passed over, and I think there is no danger of its thundering again.

Row. I hope not.

Miss S. I will order the carriage, if you wish.

Row. I would be awfully obliged to you. [*Miss S. rings.*] I hope I shall not get cold from the damp air. I always do. I ought never to go out without a thick coat and goloshes. My health is very delicate, and I haven't any wife to take care of me, you know. [*Coughs.*]

[*Enter Madge.*]

Miss S. [*scornfully*]. Tell James to get the carriage, and put in a plenty of rugs.

Madge. Rugs? Yes'm.

Miss S. Bring a Mackintosh and shawl for Mr. Hinsdale.

Madge. Yes'm. [*Aside.*] Well, if he is not the greatest — Oh! goodness! I can't express my contempt.

[*Rowland, who has been laughing, back, comes down.*]

Row. I think this is awfully good of you, Miss —

Miss S. Don't mention it. I hope you'll not catch cold from exposure.

Row. Thanks, Miss Murdoch; I shall guard against it by taking peppermint. Don't you think peppermint is good for a cold?

Miss S. Really, I don't know. Tusser, who wrote in 1523, says —

“ Good broth and good keeping do much, now and then;
Good diet, with wisdom, best comforteth men;
In health, to be stirring shall profit the best;
In sickness, hate trouble — seek quiet and rest.”

A good recipe for both health and sickness, Mr. Hinsdale.

[*Enter Madge, with heavy shawl, and light one, and hat.*]

Miss S. Wrap yourself up well; I'm really frightened about you.

Row. Well, I don't know but I'd better tie my handkerchief over my ears.

[*Ties bandanna over ears, and, with Madge's help, wraps heavy shawl about shoulders, and ties light one around neck.*]

Row. [*aside*]. I shall smother. [*Aloud.*] Good morning, miss; I'm awfully obliged to you, you know. [*Exeunt Madge and Row.*]

Miss S. [*with both hands up*]. Forever! What manner of man is this? Ah, Madame Rumor, you

spoke wrongly in this case. You said young Rowland Hinsdale was a man of talent, but —

“'T was always thus; from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a bird or flower,
But it was sure to fade away.”

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV. — *Cottage. Nathalie sewing.*

[*Rowland enters, i., steps quickly behind, and, drawing Nathalie's head back, kisses forehead.*]

Row. A penny for your thoughts.

Nath. [*springs up*]. Oh Rowland! How you startled me.

Row. Your thoughts must have been very pleasant not to have heard a lover's step. Sorrow has quick ears.

Nath. [*sighs*]. I was thinking of grandma's dislike of you.

Row. Oh! I mistrust that is nothing but fear of uncle's anger.

Nath. I hope that is all, but —

Row. Never mind buts; come and walk in the meadow.

Nath. Yes, *but* grandma's fear of your uncle's anger may not be unfounded. Oh! I dread it, too. [*Sighs.*]

Row. Trust yourself to me, and to my judgment, dear. [*Nath. smiles fondly.*] Throw care to the

wind, and come walk with me in the happy present. To-morrow may never come. That is love's wisdom. Get your hat.

[*Exit Nath., R. Enter Grandmother, L.*]

Grand. So, so, young man! You come stealing into poor people's houses to carry off their pretty grand-daughters, do you? How would it please the old Squire to hear of this? And hear of it he shall, this very day. I'll go this moment and tell him. We'll see what he'll say.

[*Enter Nathalie.*]

Nath. I am all ready.

Grand. All ready, are you? To go where, I'd like to know? Here, you may go to the Hall with me. I will see about a waiting-place for you. Come. [*Takes her arm. Nath. cries.*]

Row. Do you want a waiting-place for Nathalie, Mother Gwynne?

Grand. Yes, I do. What have you to say about it?

Row. I know where there will be one of good advantage in a week or two, and will secure it for her, if you wish. [*Aside.*] You'll wait on me, deary.

Grand. I wish you would, then. We need not go to the Hall, child. Take off your hat and go to your work again. [*Nath. obeys.*] And now, Mr. Rowland, I —

Row. Oh! good mother! Do you not remember those pleasant walks you used to take Nathalie and I, when we were little folks together? Those long, long hills you carried me up, for fear I would be tired! And then how you always insisted on carrying me down, lest I should fall and get hurt.

Grand. [*laughs*]. To be sure! [*Sits.*] What a good memory you have. Won't you sit a little, Mr. Rowland.

Row. [*sits*]. And do you remember how we used to go lily-gathering? Just this time of the year, was n't it? I never saw a flower I liked so well. What bunches we would find! I have not seen one since I left for Oxford. I wish I could remember where they used to grow.

Grand. [*knitting*]. Nathalie shall gather a bunch, and I will bring them to the Hall to-morrow. Then I can see the Squire about a place for Nathalie, too.

Row. [*hastily*]. I will speak to him about the place myself. I shall be glad to have the lilies. Still, to gather them myself would bring the old times so strongly to mind, when I used to come down from the Hall, bringing you a nice jelly. I will send you one to-morrow. [*Rises.*] I wish I could remember where those lilies grew.

Grand. Well, if Nathalie is going to gather you a bunch, you might go with her, I suppose; then she could show you the way.

Row. Thank you. Shall I come to-morrow?

Grand. Perhaps you'd better go now.

Row. I should be delighted. Come, Nathalie. [*Nath. rises and puts on hat.*] Thank you for the kind permission, mother. I will send the jelly to-morrow. Good-bye. [*Exeunt.*]

Grand. Oh, dear! oh, dear! [*Drops knitting and hurries to door, wringing hands.*] What have I done now? Let them go off together, all alone; and I proposed it! They, do just as they please with me!

[*Comes down.*] But I'll remember it! They shall not go again, that they shan't. Well [*picks up work*], it was not kind to refuse to let her go. I can't be rude to the young Squire, he is so good, always bringing me nice things, and with ever a kind word to the poor old bodies in the village. Well, well, we'll let it go now, and see what turns up. But they shan't go again!

CURTAIN.

SCENE V. — *Parlor at the Hall. Squire and Rowland.*

Row. Well, uncle, I have visited Miss Murdoch steadily for four weeks, and am well satisfied with the sensation I have produced. Would it not be well to offer myself. I feel impatient to learn my fate.

Sq. Yes, Rowland; make love hand over hand. Ah! you're a boy after my own heart. And now strike while the iron is hot, and we'll snap our fingers at sadness. [*Row. and Sq. cross.*]

Row. I scarcely know how to introduce the subject to so dignified a lady. Suppose I write; she will appreciate my delicacy.

Sq. No difference. An offer is an offer, whether made on paper or by word of mouth. Draw up your document, and let me see it.

Row. Excuse me one moment and I will bring it.
[*Exit, L.*]

Sq. [*walks about, rubbing hands*]. There's a fine fellow, now! Ah! there's nothing like keeping a tight rein on these young colts. The fellow was skittish at

first, and showed signs of bolting. [*Laughs at his own wit.*] But I kept him well in hand, and now he's as ardent over his courting as anyone could wish. Ah! it will be pleasant to hear a young voice ringing through the Hall once more. [*Sighs, and loses himself in thought.*] So here comes our young lover. [*Enter Row., L.*] Now for the proposal. Read it! read it!

Row. [*reads*]:

MY DEAR MISS MURDOCH, —

I have visited you now for several weeks, and, having carefully studied your character, make bold to offer you my hand, trusting to your affectionate nature to receive the offer favorably. Do not keep me long in this painful suspense, but return an answer by bearer to

Yours most anxiously,

R. H.

Row. Will that do?

Sq. Humph! Yes. [*Crosses over.*] Hardly as loving and ardent as I would have it; but you know best, Rowland. Send it off! Send it off! I am more in a hurry now for an answer than you are. [*Snatches letter. Exit, R.*]

Row. That can scarcely be, for I am really on tenterhooks. But it cannot be that the scheme will miscarry. I am sure that I read such disgust and intolerance in Miss Stella's face, upon my last call, that I really did not dare put in another appearance lest I should be booted from the door. But, heigho! it is a dangerous experiment to try. [*Exit, L.*]

[*A little pause before enters Sq., R.*]

Sq. Oh! "there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream." And I dreamed it once myself!

I, grizzly, bald-headed Hugo Hinsdale, had my dream of young love, my visions of matrimonial bliss, and my rude awakening. Nothing is left me now but the memory of that fair, stately presence — those soft clinging gowns, that never rustled nor hitched to things as she walked — that clear, sweet, penetrating voice! Ah! Alice! Alice! How your sunny presence would have glorified these old rooms! How your voice would have echoed in song along the dim corridors, and your cheerful laughter shamed the ugly old cockatoo into good humor! But interference! interference! Cursed interference! We were separated forever! [*Sighs.*] Then it was I vowed that I would never interfere in a love affair; never dictate to, nor attempt to control youth's wayward passions. When two hearts are drawn together, the impulse is from heaven, and the sordid calculations of this lower world ought never to outweigh that fine gold with its earthly dross! Ahem!

[*Enter footman in livery, R.*]

Footman. Here's the answer, sir. [*Exit.*]

Sq. Ah! Rowland! Rowland! you dog! [*Calls off, L.*] Rowland, my dear boy, here's your answer. [*Enter Row.*] Here's Miss Stella's letter. Open it! Read it! Lucky boy! I'm sure she'll have you. [*Aside.*] He's fairly pale with emotion. Poor fellow! How deeply in love he is.

[*Row. reads to himself, then hands letter to Sq., and walks across stage with folded arms. Speaks, aside.*]

Row. How can I conceal my joy? How can I dissemble?

Sq. What the deuce! What does this mean? She

can't have refused you! [*Reads.*] RESPECTED SIR: Ahem! rather cool, that!

Row. Cool, but polite. I do not dislike the expression, but feel honored by her respect. Read on, uncle.

Sq. [*reads*]. Allow me to thank you for the honor you have conferred by asking me to become Mrs. Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall — [Ahem! Rather premature! *Squire* Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall is still above ground, let me tell her! However, no harm done. Mrs. Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall! Sounds well, I must confess. Suits Miss Stella, too, eh?]

Row. Go on, uncle.

Sq. [*reads*]. And rest assured that, though I cannot accept it — [What! Cannot accept it?] I remain, with sentiments of esteem — [Psh! Bosh! Confound her sentiments. Refuse you! good-looking and agreeable fellow as you are; and heir to such a property, too. I declare I've half a mind to turn you out of doors. You didn't half court her.]

Row. But uncle —

Sq. You are a disgrace to the family! Refuse you! Sha!

Row. It might have been a previous attachment.

Sq. No, 'tain't! I found that out before I advised your courtship. It's just you, yourself, that's the matter. It's *you* she refuses, not the Hall, nor the money, nor the cross bachelor uncle. Ha! ha! ha! But you, *you*, you! I know all about her. A true lady. She would just have suited you. But you couldn't suit her. Poor fellow! I pity you! Can't get married! Humph! Why don't you go offer your-

self to Nathalie, at the cottage? Perhaps *she* will have you! I'd try it, by all means! Ha! ha! ha!

Row. [*aside*]. Uncle's advice must always be followed. [*Exit, R.*]

Sq. Where's the poor fellow gone? Out to walk in the park, I suppose. Well, 't is rough on him, but we mustn't give it up so. We can find some other young lady as good as Miss Stella. Yes, dozens of them. What could have possessed her? Why, he's a perfect picture of what I was at his age, and I was a terrible fellow among the girls! Terrible! Why, I could have had my pick of the county.

[*Enter Rowland.*]

Row. She says she'll have me. [*Laughs.*]

Sq. What! Who says she'll have you?

Row. [*innocently*]. Why, Nathalie Gwynne.

Sq. Nathalie Gwynne! Mother Gwynne's daughter?

Row. To be sure. I thought there was no chance of getting any one else, and as you advised me to offer myself to her, I —

Sq. Confound it all! You have not been such a fool? [*Sq. and Row. cross.*]

Row. I followed your advice, sir.

Sq. My advice! You are a blockhead! I did not mean it; you might have known it. Nathalie Gwynne! [*Walks about stage.*] You shall never marry her! Never! Confusion! *Did* you offer yourself?

Row. I did, uncle, honestly. And she accepted me. Says she has always loved me. It will break her heart to tell her I was only trifling — that I did not mean it.

Sq. It has a bad look. But what can be done?

Row. Nathalie is a worthy girl. And she expects to become my wife. I cannot break with her — a good girl.

Sq. But poor.

Row. So am I. The only difference between us is that she has no good, kind Uncle Hinsdale! She is handsome, and that is the first quality necessary in a wife!

Sq. Humph!

Row. She is spirited! [*Sq. nods.*] Intelligent! [*Nods.*] We can procure teachers, and accomplish her at the Hall! [*Nods.*] All but rich, and your wealth is sufficient for us both.

Sq. Humph!

Row. She is an orphan, too; and what will become of her when her old grandmother dies? So young and lovely, alone in the world!

Sq. Poor child! It would be bad for her. Yes, it would.

Row. Then, uncle, she knows you, and all your ways — which a stranger would not — and would be more willing to let things be as they are. She really loves you.

Sq. [*laughing*]. Why, you dog! I believe you followed your own inclination, as well as my advice, when you proposed to little Nathalie. Confess you love her.

Row. [*in great confusion*]. Yes, uncle, I love Nathalie.

Sq. Ha! ha! Well, then, I made a lucky hit with my advice, that time. I shouldn't wonder if she suited

us better than Miss Stella. You're a fortunate fellow, after all. [*Slaps him on the back.*] Ha! ha! ha! Trust your uncle to find a wife for you. And now get married — get married as soon as you can. I must hear the gay young voice ringing through the house. Shake hands with me, boy. [*Shake hands.*] Come, come, let us go to the cottage. I want to see my new niece that is to be.

CURTAIN.

SCENE VI. — *Cottage. Nathalie alone. Rowland enters, l.*

Row. Nathalie, darling Nathalie! Uncle has given his consent to our marriage!

Nath. Rowland! [*Throws herself into his arms.*]

Row. Now I can in truth call you mine. Now there is nothing to part us.

[*They come down, Row.'s arm about waist of Nath. Enter uncle, l. Row. and Nath. walk across stage, r.*]

Sq. [*aside*]. How happy the young people are. I wish everybody could get married. [*Rubs hands.*] Wish I was married myself! [*Laughs. Row. and Nath. turn. Sq. opens arms.*] My children! [*They come toward him.*]

Row. My uncle! Bless our betrothal. [*They kneel.*]

Sq. My dear children, may all good befall you; may unnumbered blessings rest upon you.

[*Enter Grandma, l. Speaks as she enters.*]

Grand. Nathalie, did I see that young — [*Holds*

up hands; drops into chair.] For mercy's sake! — [Row. and Nath. rise and approach Grand. Sq. crosses, wiping eyes.]

Row. Mother, will you give me your little Nathalie, with Uncle Hinsdale's blessing?

Grand. Humph! Young sir, your uncle will never give it!

Sq. [turns]. Yes, he will! yes, he will!

Grand. [starts up]. The old Squire! He too! — Well, well, well! wonders will never cease. [*Clasps their hands.*] Take her, Mr. Rowland. I give her to you, gladly. [*Turns away.*] And 't is a great weight off my shoulders.

[*Row., with arm about Nath., crosses R. Sq. crosses L, and shakes hands with Grandma. While they converse in dumb show, enter (L.) Miss S. and Madge. They advance to back, c.*]

Madge. [stopping on threshold]. Good gracious! there 'll be tantrums now! [*Gets behind Miss S.*]

Miss S. What do my eyes behold? Is this the lover methought broken-hearted? Ah, me!

“ He looked upon *her* beauty, and forgot,
As in a sense of drowning, all things else.
O most unhappy me, he loved me not !”

“ The bee thro' many a garden roves,
And hums his lay of courtship o'er ;
But when he finds the flower he loves,
He settles there, and hums no more.”

[*Comes down.*]

Sq. Ah! good morning. [*Shakes hands.*] Good morning. Miss Stella, we have to thank you for — for — a great pleasure. Good morning.

[*Shakes hands with Madge, who stares, surprised.*]

Miss S.

"Let Fate do her worst ; there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy."

Sq. What ! what ! What did you say, my dear madam ?

Miss S.

"O doubt me not, the season
Is o'er when Folly made me rove,
And now the vestal Reason
Shall watch the fires of love.
Altho' this heart was early blown,
And *fairest* hands [*waving toward Row.*] disturb'd the tree,
They only shook some blossoms down ;
Its *fruit* has all been kept for *thee*."

[*Places her hand in Squire's. Grand. sits, grumbling, l.*]

Sq. [*aside*]. The deuce it has ! [*Aloud.*] Ahem !
Allow me to present to you my future niece. [*Nath. courtseys.*]

Miss S. [*waving her away*]. Some future time, perhaps, but not to-day. The wounds of memory are yet too fresh, and slightest cause may make them bleed anew !

Sq. [*aside*]. H'm ! h'm ! I'm glad she wouldn't have him. What the young dog found in her to love I can't conceive ! Why, little Nathalie has twice the sense, and breeding, too, for that matter. Trust *my* judgment !

Miss S. [*walking about with clasped hands and upturned eyes*]. I will write a poem upon this momentous occasion ; an epithalamium which shall make my

name immortal. Listen! I hear the harmonies of heaven! [*Strikes tragic attitude, c., front.*]

Madge [*pulling at her*]. Come down *here*, Miss Stella! We live on earth! Why don't you speak to young Mr. Hinsdale?

Miss S. Child, to what memories do you bring me! [*Aside.*] And shall I congratulate *them*? [*To Row.*]

“When I met thee, warm and young,
 There shone such truth about thee,
 And on thy lips such promise hung,
 I did not dare to doubt thee.
 But go, deceiver! go!
 The heart whose hopes could make it
 Trust one so false, so low,
 Deserves that thou shouldst break it.”

Mr. Hinsdale [*sitting, aside*]. I should just like to know one thing,—who did the courting, and who did the refusing? [*Aloud.*] Miss Stella, I know some poetry—some fine poetry—listen!

“Higgle-te-piggle-te-pot,
 The dog has ate the mop,
 The cat's —”

Miss S. [*fainting*]. Catch me, Madge! My sensitive soul cannot endure such a profanation of the divine art. [*Leans heavily upon Madge, who can scarce support the weight. Nath. looks concerned. Row. fans her with hat. Grand. bustles forward.*]

Grand. Get the camfire! get the camfire, child!

Sq. Fiddle-de-dee! [*Rising.*] Fetch her up to the Hall, and give her a good square meal of bride's cake and wine! Come, all of you! We'll have a wedding before night. [*Miss S. slowly recovers.*]

Nath. Oh! Mr. Hinsdale! That is too soon!

Row. I always obey my uncle!

Madge. Good boy!

Sq. Nathalie, I have much to be thankful for.
[*Shakes her hand.*] Rowland, old boy! [*claps him on back*] you will do well to *always* obey your uncle.
Come, mother. [*Offers arm to Grandma.*] Come on, come on. [*Exeunt Sq., Grand., Row., and Nath.*
Miss S. looks after them tragically.]

Miss S.

“Farewell! and whenever you welcome the hour
That awak’ns the night song of mirth in your bower,
Then think of the friend who once welcomed it, too,
And forgot her own griefs, to be happy with you.”

Come, Madge, they have everything good at the Hall;
we may as well go, too.

Madge [*smacks lips*]. Miss Stella, there is great
consolation in a nice dinner.

CURTAIN.

The Play may close here, or conclude with

SCENE VII. — *Performance of Wedding March, in the midst of which curtain rises upon tableau — The Wedding of Rowland and Nathalie. Stage should be set for parlor at the Hall. Cottage in first grooves, which can be easily transformed into Miss S.’s sanctum.*

A BUNCH OF BUTTERCUPS.

CHARACTERS.

FOUR WOMEN, TWO MEN, ONE LITTLE GIRL.

Music: BUTTERCUP'S SONG.

[Enter, L., pretty Dutch girl, in national costume, with basket of laces on her arm. Sings:—]

I's galled leedle Pootergub,
Dear leedle Pootergub,
Dough I gant nefer dells vy.
Poot shtill I's galled Pootergub,
Dear leedle Pootergub,
Shveet leedle Pootergub, I.

[Passes off, R., as enter, L., darky woman. Sings:—]

Dis chile am called Buttercup,
Dee leetle Buttercup,
Dough I does n't never know why;
But still I's called Buttercup,
Lily-white Buttercup,
Mos' lubly Buttercup, me.

[Passes off, R., as enter, L., Irishman, in national costume. Sings:—]

It's mesilf that's called Boothercoop,
 Dear little Boothercoop,
 Though it bothers me head to tell why;
 But the ladies (bless 'em!) are afther callin' me
 Boothercoop,
 Shwate little Boothercoop,
 Arrah! it's mesilf that's the Boothercoop
 bh'y.

[*Passes off, R., as enter, L., Chinaman (hold the outer corners of eyes up with forefingers, to give them obliquity). Sings:—*]

Mi am alwiz callee Buttleclup,
 Dee leedle Buttleclup,
 Allee samee mi nevee 'll dell why.
 Steel mi am callee Buttleclup,
 Dee leedle Buttleclup,
 Sweetee leedle Buttleclup, mi.

[*Exit, R. Enter, L., Scotch lassie. Sings:—*]

I am callit wee Buttercup,
 Dear little Buttercup,
 I hope none will spier o' me why!
 For I'm always call't Buttercup,
 Bonnie, bright Buttercup,
 Wee, blinkin' Buttercup, I.

[*Exit, R. Enter, L., old French tambourine woman. Speaks:—*]

Von leedle twenty-five cents, dear messieurs and
 sweet ladies! Von leedle twenty-five cents for de
 pauvre orphan whose farder and mooder die in der last

war. Oh, gif to me for der loof of sweet charitee, for
[sings and dances to tambourine] —

J'suis jamais call Buttercup,
Chère petite Buttercup,
Dough I nevair tells you pourquoi ;
Mais still je suis Buttercup,
Chère petite Buttercup,
Most charmant Buttercup, moi !

Twenty-five cents, most charitable messieurs and mes-
dames ! [Exit, L., jingling tambourine, and speaking
as she goes.]

[The various exits and entrances being through the
near entrances, enter now from R. U. E., little girl dressed
in green and yellow, to represent a buttercup blossom.
Buttercup hat, made of yellow board cut in ten scallops to
represent ten petals, green sepals turned back over crown,
green stem hanging over. Pink hose, green slip-
pers. Basket of battercups and grasses. Runs down,
sings : —]

I'm the real little Buttercup,
Dear little Buttercup,
I'm thinking you all can tell why.
For I'm always called Buttercup,
Dear little Buttercup,
Sweet little Buttercup I.

[Enter, R. U. E., actors in reverse order, headed by
tambourine woman. Form in semicircle around little
girl, sing in concert their various stanzas.]

Curtain.



A CHANGE OF COLOR.

A Drama in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

HAROLD GREY . . . *A wealthy young gentleman, fond of
verse-making*
JIM *His Irish servant*
NELLIE BROWNE *A young lady*
LETTIE ROSS *Her intimate friend*
ELLEN BROWN *Irish servant in Nellie's home*

COSTUMES.

Harold, neat business suit.
Jim, common working clothes.
Nellie, tasteful home costume.
Lettie, the same.
Ellen, neat working dress.



A CHANGE OF COLOR.

SCENE. — *A parlor or sitting-room. (NELLIE and LETTIE are discovered seated, c., in rocking-chairs, and busy with fancy work.)*

LETTIE. It has just occurred to me, Nellie, it is two months to-day since you received that valentine.

NELLIE. Why, so it is. How good you are at remembering dates. (*Aside.*) She little imagines how well *I* remember it.

LETTIE. And do you still think Harold Grey sent it?

NELLIE. Do I *still* think he sent it? As if I *ever* thought so, Lettie.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, come, now, Nellie: there's no use of your playing off on me in that way.

NELLIE (*very gravely*). What do you mean, Lettie? Did I ever *say* he sent it?

LETTIE. Certainly not. Oh, you sly puss! people don't always need to *say* things in order to be understood.

NELLIE. You seem to forget that it was you who suggested Harold Grey, simply because he was the only young gentleman who lived opposite my home.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, you delicious piece of innocence! of course I don't forget, neither do I forget how very easily you were convinced.

NELLIE (*angrily*). Perhaps, though, you forget how much trouble you took to bring about my introduction to the young gentleman?

LETTIE (*leaning forward, and patting NELLIE on the knee*). Come, now, Nellie, don't be vexed with me; I'll not tease you any more. Of course I worked hard to bring about an acquaintance between you, and I am sure he, poor fellow, has worked quite as hard to keep it up.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). You were very kind.

LETTIE (*soothingly*). There, Nellie, don't let us quarrel over Harold Grey. Indeed, if we do, I shall wish we had never either of us heard of him; but, honestly, Nellie, the next best thing to winning the young gentleman's favor myself, was to see him smile on you, as he has been doing for the last two months.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). Perhaps it is not too late yet, for you to make a conquest of him yourself.

LETTIE (*sweetly*). Now, Nellie, dear, don't make any more of those sharp speeches. I know, and so do you, that he is up to his eyes in love with you; and you know also that I'm not a bit envious of you.

(*Enter R., ELLEN BROWN hastily, and carrying a crumpled sheet of note paper.*)

NELLIE (*throwing her arm about LETTIE*). You are a dear good girl, Lettie, and I—

ELLEN (*advancing C., speaking excitedly*). Shure, Miss

Nellie, wull ye read this? (*Extends paper. Both girls jump from their chairs, dropping fancy work.*)

LETTIE. } (*together*). Oh, what is it?
NELLIE. }

ELLEN (*more quietly*). Oh, ut's nothing fur ye's to be scairt of, young ladies. Shure I jist wants ter axe ye, Miss Nellie, did ye get a valentine last winter beginning loike this,—

“Moi pretty colleen bawn,
Smoiling like the summer dawn.”

NELLIE (*laughing, and dropping into her chair again*). No, indeed, Ellen, I did not; I am sure I am no one's “colleen bawn.” (*ELLEN turns away, throws her apron over her head, and drops into the chair vacated by LETTIE.*)

LETTIE. Was there ever anything so funny? Have you broken the heart of some wild Irishman, Miss Nellie?

ELLEN (*sobbing aloud*). Och, it's desaved I am, entoirely! (*LETTIE and NELLIE go to ELLEN. NELLIE puts her hand on her shoulder.*)

NELLIE. Tell me all about your trouble, Ellen. Perhaps I may be able to help you in some way.

ELLEN (*wipes her eyes, and removes the apron, but sobs frequently as she goes on with her recital*). It's like this, Miss: Jimmie end me's been kinder off since iver St. Valontaine's day —

LETTIE (*impatiently*). But, who is Jimmie?

NELLIE. Don't interrupt her, he's —

ELLEN (*pertly to LETTIE*). Shure he's me shpark, Miss, an' a loikely one he is, too. (*Aside.*) An' a loikelier one than she'll ever pick up, I'm a-thinking,

unless she mends her manners, (*To NELLIE.*) Ye see, I jist give him the cowld showlder, case never a scrip nor a scrap of a valentine came from him. So he niver axed no ixplanashuns of me, but jist kept out o' me woi, which same is quoitelike him. To-day we meets in the parrk, quoitelike be chance; and I says, kinder shwate loike, Good-morning, Jimmie. Och! but he was by me side that quick. Then he says, bold and suddin loike, "So ye didn't think much o' the valentine I sint ye." Valentine, I says, pretty shtiff, an' ye know ye niver sint me wan. And thin he said he did; so I made him dishcribe it, and shure it wasn't a way bit loike the mane stingy wans I got at all, at all. Thin he says nixt, and I got Misther Grey to write some shwate poitry—

NELLIE. Mr. Grey! not Mr. Harold Grey, so lately moved across the street?

ELLEN. The very same, miss.

LETTIE. But how does young Jimmie know him?

ELLEN. Och! bless ye, Miss, me Jimmie has worrked there iver sinse he was a way laddie. And shure (*looking down bashfully*) 'tis for that Misther Grey happens to be living over there: me Jimmie found the house empty, and he thought 'twould be so handy, you know.

LETTIE. Evidentiy Mr. Jimmie has a good head for planning.

NELLIE. But about the poetry, Lettie, did you know that Harold Grey writes poetry?

LETTIE. Indeed, it is news to me. Aren't you mistaken about it, Ellen?

ELLEN (*scornfully to LETTIE*). Mistaken? well I guess not; what me Jimmie doesn't know about Misther Harold Grey, you needn't try to foind out. (*To NELLIE.*) But his poitry is in all the papers, with some other name tul it that I disremember now; but me Jimmie could tell you.

NELLIE (*eagerly*). Oh, do find out for me, Ellen!

ELLEN. Shure and I will, Miss, to plaze you; but let me tell the rest of me story. When I said that I niver got no valentine the loikes o' that, Jimmie whipped this bit o' paper out o' his pocket, an' he said them was the same words as Misther Grey wrote in the valentine. And then, he says, Misther Grey directed it all shtraight to Miss Nellie Brown. So, I says, Och, you blunderin' b'y! no one calls me Nellie but your own silly self, so it's shtraight to Miss Nellie the poor valentine wint. So I comes to ye, Miss, and ye says ye niver got no sech words at all, at all; an it's a lyin' desavin' scamp me Jimmie is afther all. (*Buries her face, and sobs.*)

NELLIE (*aside to LETTIE*). All this is very strange. I certainly did not get her valentine. (*To ELLEN.*) Will you let me see the paper, Ellen? (*ELLEN hands it to her, and again buries her face, and continues to sob. A bell rings.*)

NELLIE (*to ELLEN*). Hurry, Ellen, and see who is at the door. (*Exit ELLEN, R., hurriedly, wiping her eyes as she goes.*)

NELLIE (*to LETTIE, who looks over her shoulder, and examines writing.*) This writing is certainly done by

the same hand that penned my valentine. Don't you think so, Lettie?

LETTIE (*taking the paper*). I certainly do, which of course proves conclusively that Harold Grey sent your valentine.

NELLIE. Provided that the devoted Jimmie tells the truth.

LETTIE. Does he look capable of lying?

NELLIE. What a question! I have heard that all men —

LETTIE. Oh, there, spare us any cynicism, my dear! but —

NELLIE. Yes, *but*, and this is a very large *but*, what has become of Ellen's valentine, if Jimmie sent it? It is all —

(*Enter HAROLD, R., hastily. He is followed by ELLEN.*

LETTIE *furtively lays the paper on a table at L. of C., and returns to C.* ELLEN *goes forward, snatches the paper, and is about to retire, R., when she stands transfixed at HAROLD'S words.*)

HAROLD. Good-morning, ladies; excuse me, Miss Nellie, but I would like, with your permission, to talk with Ellen a moment about her valentine. (NELLIE *bows assent.*) I have brought my man Jim with me, and, if you are willing, I would like to have Ellen call him in here. (NELLIE *bows, and exit ELLEN.*) I am very sorry, Miss Nellie, to trouble you with all this; but the circumstances are so very peculiar, that I find myself forced to seek an explanation from Ellen. (ELLEN *enters followed by JIM, reluctantly and bashfully.*) Now,

Ellen, did you receive a valentine containing some verses beginning, —

“O me pretty colleen bawn?”

ELLEN (*joyfully*). ‘Thin me Jimmie didn’t loi to me shure? But I niver got that same valentine at all, at all, an’ I thought ut’s desavin’ me he was. (*Looks sideways at JIMMIE, who smiles at her.*)

HAROLD. Then it’s just as I feared. Oh, what a stupid blunder! (*To NELLIE.*) You see, I had promised to write some rhymes for two valentines: one for Jimmie, to be sent to Ellen, here (*ELLEN and JIM exchange smiles and glances*), and one for an old friend of mine, to be sent to his Dulcinea. The latter was late in getting to its destination, consequently, when my friend left the office, he told the boy that if a letter came bearing the postmark of this town, he must open it, and enclose whatever it contained in the envelope waiting directed on the desk, and then mail the same immediately. The office boy obeyed, and, of course, like any other inquisitive, conscience-lacking boy, read the verses, and took due note of the address.

ELLEN. Och! the mane shcamp!

HAROLD. So, a few days after, it chanced that my friend most unexpectedly obtained an introduction to the lady in whom he felt so keen an interest. Their acquaintance progressed finely, until, thanks to the smallness of the town and the office boy’s indiscretion, the name of the sender of this particular valentine reached the young lady’s ears.

NELLIE. } Oh, how delightful!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. Not so delightful either, for I had mixed the valentines in my haste, and imagine how either of you would fancy being addressed by a total stranger as his

“ Pretty colleen bawn,
Smiling like the summer dawn.”

NELLIE. } (*laughing*). How funny! Oh, how funny!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. My friend did not think it very funny, I assure you. The young lady wrote him a caustic note for presuming to claim her as his “colleen bawn.” Then, I came in for a good round scolding for sending him lines of that character, when I knew the young lady was a stranger to him. I saw at once that I had mixed up the valentines in some way; so now, Ellen, if you will kindly give me the valentine which was intended for the other fair maid, I think I can settle this matter all around, and prove to my friend that I still have at least a grain of sense left.

ELLEN. It's roight glad I'll be to help you settle the matter, Misther Grey, if you'll jist tell me what loike was the other valentinoe, shure.

HAROLD. Well, it was simply a sheet of heavy note paper, and on it some lines beginning, —

“ O maiden sweet,
Across the street — ”

NELLIE (*starting forward*). Why, that was my —

LETTIE (*laughing*). Well, of *all* the funny mistakes!

HAROLD (*coming to NELLIE, and taking her hand*). You don't mean to say, Miss Nellie, that *you* received that silly nonsense.

NELLIE (*withdrawing her hand, and speaking coldly*). I certainly did receive a valentine such as you have just described.

ELLEN. Och, Miss Nellie, an' ye got moine afther all, or the one what was mixshed up wid moine. Now, ye see (*to JIM*), that's all case ye sint it to Nellie insted o' Ellin, jist.

NELLIE (*impatiently*). I ought to have known the letter was not for me, for Brown was spelt without an *e*. (*To HAROLD.*) But, I suppose you want your valentine ; I'll look it up, and if you'll call to-morrow I'll hand it to you. (*Aside.*) It's in my pocket this very minute, but of course I shall not tell him so.

HAROLD. Oh, that will be all right, Miss Nellie. But, now, Jim, what can I do to straighten this matter between you and your "colleen" ?

JIM (*taking ELLEN'S arm*). Faith, sur, an' we'll straighten it ourselves jist, though thanks to ye all the same. (*They walk apart, and converse confidentially in whispers.*)

HAROLD. And now, dear Miss Nellie, I have no apology to make to you, except that the verses which the good St. Valentine brought to you were not worthy the one to whom he carried them. Thanks to St. Valentine, my friend's misfortune is my blessing.

NELLIE (*coldly*). It is all the fault of my horrid common name of Browne. (*HAROLD takes her hand, and bends toward her tenderly.*)

LETTIE (*aside*). It's very evident that I'm out of place in this crowd. Oh, if I had only a tailor's dummy, or even a stick, to make love to just now ! I

believe I'll hunt up the poker as a substitute. (*Goes to rear, and, while watching the others, indulges in pantomime until the curtain falls.*)

HAROLD. Since you dislike the name of Browne so much, Miss Nellie, why not change it to "*Grey*," dear Nellie? Don't say you dislike "*Grey*" also.

NELLIE (*archly*). *Grey* always was my favorite color.

JIM (*coming forward with ELLEN*). Shure, Mистер *Grey*, we've straightened it, sur. We're to be married in jist wan month from this happy day.

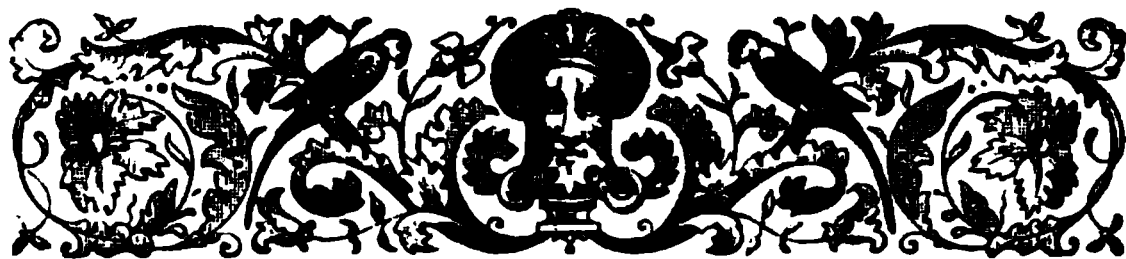
HAROLD (*shaking JIM's hand*). Well done, Jim. Miss Nellie and I have also "*straightened it*:" she has consented to become Mrs. *Grey*. (*Puts his arm about her.*)

NELLIE (*saucily*). How you do take things for granted, sir!

JIM. Och, bedad, and from "*Brown*" to "*Grey*" is a good "*change o' color*!" and may ye's niver rigit that same av ye's live till ye're an hundred and a day.

(HAROLD, NELLIE, R.; JIM, ELLEN, L.; LETTIE *in rear* C., *laughing.*)

CURTAIN.



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

A Drama in Three Short Acts.

CHARACTERS.

MR. NEAL *A wealthy gentleman of middle age*
LOTTIE *His daughter*
ERNEST MERLE, *A wealthy young gentleman, in love with*
LOTTIE; disguised as MR. SPIERS, a book-agent
TIM *An Irish lad*
AUNT PRUE *An old lady, deaf, and very eccentric*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Neal, handsome business suit.

Mr. Spiers, plainer business suit; a wig of red hair; also heavy whiskers and mustache to match.

Tim, a new cheap "store suit."

Lottie, stylish morning costume.

Aunt Prue, handsome dress for an old lady.



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor.* MR. SPIERS *is discovered striding angrily about the room ; comes to C.*

MR. SPIERS. That stupid Tim ! I've a good mind to discharge him on the spot. Of course he has to be in my confidence, in a measure, and he has a dozen times nearly spoiled all by his blunders. Ah ! there he comes.

(*Enter TIM, R.*)

TIM (*speaking rapidly*). Sure, Misther Mer—

MR. SPIERS (*angrily*). There, Tim ! *can't* you learn anything ?

TIM (*bowing humbly*). Faith an' I crave yer honor's parding, but shure Misther Mer— Spier—ut's roight. I got it that toime—but ye're the gay laddie buck in that rig. (*Laughs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*frowning*). Well, enough of that, Tim. But now, tell me if you've done your errands properly.

TIM. It's that I have, Mr. Spiers,—listen to that jist—though I came near niver foinding meself in this big Chicagie.

MR. SPIERS. Well, Tim, there is just one thing

about it, you must be more careful about my name. You have come very near spoiling everything several times.

TIM. Indade, thin, and I'll be that keerful, shure an' I'd niver spoil your little lark at all, at all.

MR. SPIERS (*gravely*). Tim, this is no "little lark." It is a very serious business. Perhaps if I tell you all about it, you will be able to keep a closer watch on that blundering tongue of yours. The truth is, Tim, I am in love with a young lady —

TIM (*interrupting*). Bless her purty eyes whoever she is, but she's a lucky colleen.

MR. SPIERS. No; she is most unlucky, for her father hates me, and will not allow us to meet; so, when I was nearly wild to see her, I hit upon this disguise and gained admission to her presence as a book-agent. Then, I learned that they were coming West, so I immediately followed them here.

TIM. Begorra an' is she in this city, sur?

MR. SPIERS. In this city? Tim, she is in this very hotel. I saw her last night and this morning at the table. But this is not all, Tim. I have a friend in this city who knows the young lady's father, Mr. Neal, well. I went to see this friend, without my disguise, of course, and told him my story. The consequence was that he came up to the hotel early last evening when we were all standing around talking, and, pretending to chance upon me unexpectedly, he managed to introduce me to Mr. Neal as Mr. Spiers. I stuck by him all the evening, took him to a concert, met him again this morning before breakfast, and he then said he would introduce

me to his daughter at the first opportunity. Now, do you see, Tim?

TIM. Shure, an' it's a nate schame it is sur, and I'll be as keerful as iver I can, sur.

MR. SPIERS. Well, here (*hands coin*), go out and buy me the morning paper and bring it to me down in the office. (*Exit TIM, R.*) I think if I lounge about there awhile, I am likely to see Mr. Neal and perhaps be *kindly* introduced to my beloved. (*Exit, R.*)

(*Enter LOTTIE, L.; carries a newspaper; comes to C.*)

LOTTIE. How delightful to know that I am at last in Chicago, but I must see what is going on in this great city. (*Sits in chair, and opening the paper is absorbed in it.*)

(*Enter MR. NEAL, L.*)

MR. NEAL (*going to LOTTIE*). Oh, here you are. I was in hopes to find you. I want to bring a young friend of mine up here and introduce him.

LOTTIE (*her eyes on the paper*). But first you must tell me who he is, what is his occupation, and where his residence?

MR. NEAL. His name is Mr. Spiers, and —

LOTTIE (*not looking up*). Oh, there, there, that's enough. Spare me anything further.

MR. NEAL. But you *must* hear the rest. Charlie Lount introduced him to me, so he must be all right. He is a very entertaining young fellow, and when discussing business matters he has a manner that suits me exactly.

LOTTIE (*turning the paper, but not looking up*). And his business?

MR. NEAL. General book-agent.

LOTTIE (*starting up and speaking scornfully*). "Book-agent!" The idea of introducing a book-agent to *me*!

MR. NEAL (*striding angrily up to her*). Now, I'd just like to know what you mean by such pertness, miss?

LOTTIE (*aside*). Dear me, what a fancy he must have taken to Mr. Spiers. (*To him.*) I mean what I say, of course. I don't care to know a book-agent. (*Walks off, R.*)

MR. NEAL (*following her*). See here, young woman, do you forget that your father sprang from the ranks, and won by honest toil the wealth that you so arrogantly enjoy?

LOTTIE (*returns to C.; sits*). How can I forget it when you so often go out of your way to remind me of it? (*Reading paper again.*)

MR. NEAL (*sternly*). Well, understand me, I want no more of this high-mightiness from you. It all comes from your association with that young aristocrat, Ernest Merle. His father snubbed and brow-beat me when I was a youth, and now comes his son filling my daughter's head with high-strung notions. It's too much to bear patiently, and I don't want any more of it. But I do want you to be civil to Mr. Spiers. I'm going to hunt him up now, and just remember if you get off any of your hity-tity ways to him, I promise you, you'll regret it. (*Exit, R.*)

LOTTIE (*throws down paper; rises*). Polite to him, polite to him! Ah, if he only knew how hard it will be to avoid being even more than he asks. But I do

fear I shall laugh in his face, for he looks so comical in that disguise. How dreadful it would be if I should laugh! Father would then think, of course, that I am not treating Mr. Spiers with becoming deference; but I hear them coming, I must control my countenance.

(Sits, takes up paper and reads.)

(Enter MR. NEAL and MR. SPIERS, R. The introduction is given and received in due form, LOTTIE and MR. SPIERS performing their parts with becoming gravity.)

MR. NEAL. And now, Lottie, if you can entertain Mr. Spiers, I shall be very glad, as I have a little business *(looks at watch)* to attend to at this very hour. I will ask your aunt to come down. Good-morning, Spiers, see you at dinner. *(Exit, R.)*

MR. SPIERS *(embracing LOTTIE)*. Your aunt? What does he mean? I didn't know you were troubled with so useless an appendage. *Must* she come here to bother us?

LOTTIE. Oh, she'll not bother us much. She's as deaf as a post, and never sits down without falling asleep. *(Both laugh.)*

MR. SPIERS. But who is she?

LOTTIE. My mother's only brother's widow. You must know, at the last moment some one told papa it would be unconventional for me to wander about the country with him unless I had a chaperon, so he sent for Aunt Prue; but here she comes.

(Enter AUNT PRUE, L.)

LOTTIE *(goes up to her and shouts in her ear)*. Good-morning, Aunt Prue; did you rest well?

AUNT PRUE *(also speaking very loud)*. Oh, Mr. Cres-

well! How do you do, Mr. Creswell? Happy to meet you.

(LOTTIE *smothers a laugh behind her handkerchief*. MR. SPIERS *bows gravely*. AUNT PRUE *passes and sits in a large chair behind them while they face the audience and laugh*.)

MR. SPIERS. So, I have another name. I hope you'll not forget who I am.

LOTTIE. I hope I shall remember it better than poor auntie does her chaperonage. See, she is asleep already.

MR. SPIERS (*embraces LOTTIE*). Bless her! She is the finest old lady I ever saw. But now I must tell you, I have ordered a carriage so that we can see something of the city. Your father approved of the plan, but as he said nothing about Aunt Prue, the carriage I have ordered will hold only two.

(*At this point TIM enters, R., unseen by them. He doubles himself up with silent laughter, and makes grimaces at them, as they stand lovingly together. He then goes out, silently, at the conclusion of MR. SPIERS'S next speech.*)

LOTTIE. Oh, she will never miss us, poor soul. *Isn't* she a delightful chaperon to have?

(AUNT PRUE *snores*.)

MR. SPIERS. The very best I ever saw. I hope she will always be so sleepy. Your father told me this morning that he was going next to Virginia City. Of course I also have business engagements there. (TIM *whistles outside*.)

(They start away from each other. Enter TIM, R., grinning.)

TIM. The carriage is at the dure, Mr. Mer— Spiers, yer honor.

LOTTIE *(to TIM, laughing)*. Look out, my fine fellow.
(To SPIERS.) I will be ready in a moment, Mr. Spiers.
(To TIM.) You see *I* know my lesson.

(Exeunt MR. SPIERS and TIM, R.)

LOTTIE *(throwing a kiss to AUNT PRUE, who, with her head thrown back in her chair and her mouth open, is snoring loudly)*. By, by, auntie; pleasant may thy dreams be. *(Exit, L.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor at Virginia City. (Costumes for this Act are the same as in Act I.) Enter TIM, R., looking eagerly about.*

TIM. Shure no, and she's not here yit. (*Sighs.*) Bless me buttons, but I wish she'd come. Shure Mis-ther Merle — och, blast me buttons! — Shpiers, jist kapes me a-running in an' out o' this parlor to see if she's come dune the stairs jist, whiles he stands around on one leg looking that lonesome after her, 'twould make your heart ache jist to look at him. Shure, an' it's jolly larks we's had the last two weeks, sich times in owld Chicagie; och, but I wish we were back there ag'in. Well, I'll go and tell him shure his swateheart is nowhere about. (*Going, R.*)

(*Enter LOTTIE, L.*)

LOTTIE (*coming to c.*). O Tim, is that you? Good-morning; have you seen Mr. Spiers this morning, Tim?

TIM (*returning to c.*). Och, miss, have I sane him? Well, if you'll belave me, he's kept me running to look for you ever since the breakfast was over.

LOTTIE. Well, where is he now?

TIM. Out on the veranda, looking as lonesome as a pigeon in a shnow shtorm. Whatever was the matter wid ye this morning?

LOTTIE. I know I am a little late, but I had a dress-

maker to attend to this morning, and — (*Enter SPIERS, R.*) Ah, there he comes. You may go now.

MR. SPIERS (*comes to C. and takes LOTTIE's hand*). Yes, go now, Tim.

TIM (*aside as he goes*). Och, yis, they're moighty fast to say, "go now, Tim," but, for all their shlyness, it's meself knows well what they'll be up to the minute me back is turned on 'em. (*Exit, R.*)

(MR. SPIERS *and* LOTTIE *embrace*; *he then leads her to a seat beside him on the sofa.*)

MR. SPIERS. It did seem as if you would never get down-stairs this morning. But where are your father and Aunt Prue?

LOTTIE. Oh, Aunt Prue is somewhere about. You know she and I have long ago given up trying to keep track of each other. In fact, she has looked upon me as something quite beyond her management ever since that day I went off with you and left her sleeping in her chair.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, yes, I remember about that. How long did she sleep there, do you suppose?

LOTTIE. Sure enough, I never told you about that. As soon as I returned to the hotel, I ran up to the parlor, and there she was just as I had left her. It was dinner-time, you know, so I was forced to waken her. She saw my street dress, looked at her watch, and took in, of course, how basely I had deserted her. Poor auntie, she has merely pretended to look after me ever since.

MR. SPIERS. Well, you are in no danger of not

being cared for; but you did not tell me where your father is. I have not seen him at all this morning.

LOTTIE. He has joined a party who "do" the mines this morning. They had an early breakfast and went off immediately afterward.

MR. SPIERS. You must not forget I have arranged for a party for that same purpose to-morrow.

LOTTIE. No, I have not forgotten. In fact, papa was quite put out with me because I would not go with him this morning. I did not tell him to-morrow's party was of your arranging.

MR. SPIERS. If you had, he would have excused you willingly, I think.

LOTTIE. Of course he would, but I just felt perverse enough not to tell him. (*Looking at him archly.*) In fact, I shall do nothing to encourage the ridiculous influence you have acquired over him.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Oh, indeed, perhaps you can manage in some way to break it up.

LOTTIE. Something must be done, for, if you'll believe me, he told me last night that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see me Mrs. Spiers.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). And what answer did you make?

LOTTIE. I told him he could hardly expect me to marry Mr. Spiers until he asked me.

MR. SPIERS. And that you know he'll never do.

LOTTIE. See how poor papa is deluded. He declares that Mr. Spiers is ready to throw himself at my feet if I will only be kind and give him the opportunity.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Cruel girl, to be so chary of

opportunities! But what did you say in reply to all this.

LOTTIE (*sighing*). Oh, of course, I went on in the usual strain. I declared that I should never marry any one but Ernest Merle, and that if he still continued to withhold his consent, I should be as obdurate as himself and would remain an old maid forever.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, you dear, brave girl! But, indeed, I hardly see the need of your talking so decisively to him and making him angry.

LOTTIE (*excitedly*). I tell you something's got to be done with him. He's so determined that I shall marry Mr. Spiers. If he keeps on you'll have to go away, or else I disclose the whole thing. Oh, but I was frightened, he was so angry.

MR. SPIERS. Because you declared your intention of marrying only Ernest Merle?

LOTTIE (*tearfully*). Yes: he strode around the room, and vowed I should never marry Ernest Merle while he lived. (*Sobs.*) O Ernest, he flew at me like a wild man, and shouted in my ear, "You ungrateful girl, you shall never marry that young aristocrat until I am under the ground."

(*At these words MR. SPIERS starts up in much excitement and walks away. LOTTIE buries her face in her handkerchief, and sobs aloud.*)

MR. SPIERS (*returning and laying his hand on LOTTIE's bowed head*). Lottie, stop and tell me calmly if those were his very words.

LOTTIE (*looking up*). Of course they were, but why do you look so? Surely you do not wish him dead? (*Shrinking from him.*)

MR. SPIERS. No, no ; but can't you see the advantage his words give us ?

LOTTIE (*angrily*). How can you talk so ? He shan't die ; he is as strong and as well as I am, and he is by no means an old man. O Ernest, I didn't think you'd be so cruel as to want my only parent to die, even for the sake of getting *me*. (*Sobs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*dropping on his knees beside her*). My darling, you misunderstand me altogether. Isn't he *under the ground* to-day ? And much farther, too, than he is ever likely to be again.

LOTTIE (*starting up and clasping her hands*). Oh, *now* I catch your meaning.

MR. SPIERS (*rising and putting his arm about her*). Well, then, put on your bonnet while I order the carriage. We'll visit the minister, dearest, within half an hour.

LOTTIE. But — but — you know, Ernest, he didn't mean it in that way. Isn't it unfair to take advantage of him in that way ?

MR. SPIERS. Unfair ? Certainly not. Have you forgotten "all is fair in love" ? Now be ready in half an hour. Good-day to the future Mrs. Spiers, otherwise Mrs. Merle. (*Bows low, kisses his hand and exit, R.*)

LOTTIE (*slowly coming to C.*). I see he is determined to have his own way this time. Dear me, what will papa say ? (*Stands in thought.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III.

SCENE. — *The same as in last Act. (Costumes, the same as in last Act, except for LOTTIE, who wears a handsome summer street costume, with light wrap and hat.)*

Enter MR. NEAL, L.

MR. NEAL. Where can Lottie be, I wonder? I have been at home an hour; dinner is over, and still she is not here. That blundering Irish boy, Tim, says she went off this morning with Mr. Spiers. It's strange what keeps them away beyond the dinner hour. However, I may as well make myself easy about her since she's with Spiers. (*Takes up a paper and sits, R. C.*) How I do wish she would take a fancy to him. I don't see how in the world she can help it. He is far superior to that upstart Merle, according to my way of thinking. Of course I didn't allow myself to become very well acquainted with Merle. In fact, I never thought very much about him; just saw him come and go at the house like the other youngsters, until that morning he came and asked me for my daughter. Oh, the impudence of it! He knew I hated his father. Well, at least, I had the satisfaction of giving him a curt refusal. Give him my daughter? Not a bit of it. If she is determined to marry no one but him, she may pass her days in single blessedness. Of course — I am liable — to die. Ha, I see how it will be! as soon as I am under the sod they will marry, even if

suppose the best thing he can do is to submit as gracefully as possible, but I've more than half a mind to call you Mr. and Mrs. Spiers to the end of my days.

LOTTIE (*advancing with MERLE to c.*). Oh, no, papa, spare me that punishment, I beg of you. Think of it, that dreadful name! (*Enter AUNT PRUE, L.*) But here comes Aunt Prue, we must explain the situation to her.

AUNT PRUE (*very loud while coming to c.*). What's going on? Why, Lottie, what have you done with Mr. Creswell? I saw you come home with him, but I don't know this gentlemen at all. (*Looks into MR. MERLE'S face sharply.*)

MR. NEAL (*very loud*). This is Lottie's husband, Mr. Merle.

AUNT PRUE. An English earl! Oh, my sakes! (*Courtesies very low three times.*) Glad to meet you, sir, very glad, I'm sure. I'm descended from an English earl myself. My great-great-grandmother's cousin was an English earl. Maybe you've heard of him. Let — me — see — Oh, I cannot remember his name, now; but — Lottie, you shouldn't hang on to the gentleman's arm that way, even if he is an English earl. Girls didn't do so in my time, I tell you.

LOTTIE. Oh, bother! But, papa, dear (*she goes to MR. NEAL and lays her hand upon his arm; at which AUNT PRUE nods her head vigorously, and, coming to the front, says, in an aside, "that looks better, decidedly better"*), do say that you forgive us.

MR. MERLE (*holding out his hand*). Yes, my dear sir, surely you have not forgotten "all is fair in *love*."

(At this point TIM enters at L., and keeping well in the rear, goes through with a dumb show, expressive of his understanding of, and delight in, the situation. Continues this by-play throughout the remainder of the Act.)

MR. NEAL *(giving a hand to each)*. Well, you are a pair of conspirators, but I am forced to admit "all is fair in love."

LOTTIE. Yes, indeed, papa, "*all* is fair in love, even a Mr. Spiers.

MR. NEAL. Yes, or a Mrs. Spiers.

CURTAIN.



"W. H."

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

MR. MERTIL.

MRS. MERTIL. .

JANE *A servant*

MISS FELTONBOUGH . . . *A "woman suffragist"*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Mertil, ordinary business suit.

Mrs. Mertil, neat home dress.

Jane, calico dress, long white apron.

Miss Feltonbough, plain dark dress, quite short; outside wraps and bonnet very plain, brown veil, a wig of short sandy hair, cotton gloves. This character must be a large (not fleshy) masculine-looking woman.



“W. H.”

SCENE. — *A sitting-room or parlor. Enter, R., MR. MERTIL wearing his overcoat, hat, and gloves ; he carries a written postal card conspicuously in his hand. Comes to C.*

MR. MERTIL. I thought I should find my wife here. Of course she doesn't expect me ; she thinks I am in New York to-day. Well I'll lay her postal here on the table. (*Goes to table at R., front, and lays down the card.*) She will be sure to see it there. H'm, that's a bold-looking handwriting for a lady, I hadn't observed it before ; some advertisement probably. I wonder who her correspondent can be. (*Takes up the card and turns it over, reads.*) “City, Tuesday, A.M. Dearest F—.” Well, I didn't know she had any friends intimate enough to address her as “dearest Fannie,” that must be what the “F.” is intended for. Let me see what the signature is. (*Reads.*) “G. F.” Ah ! (*starts and looks suspicious*), surely that cannot be *our* friend George Foster ? And he was once a sweetheart of hers too. But let me see what he says. (*Reads.*) “I couldn't get the ‘W. H.’ to-day, but I'll be there to-morrow at three o'clock, sharp. Be ready. Yours as ever, G. F.” (*Striding about excitedly.*) This was written yesterday, so he'll

be here this afternoon. (*Looks at card again.*) And the "W. H." what can that be? Ah, I have it, I have it. (*Excitedly.*) Foster has just bought a new horse that he always speaks of as the "*White Horse*," of course that is what is meant by the "W. H." And this afternoon; oh, well, I'll be here to spoil that pretty game. You'll not ride after the "white horse" this afternoon, my pretty lady. But, first, I'll go put this postal card back under the door where I found it. She must never know that I have seen it. (*Exit, R.*)

(*Enter MRS. MERTIL, L., comes to C.*)

MRS. MERTIL (*sighs*). Dear me, I am so lonesome this afternoon. (*Goes to chair near table and sits.*) But it must be nearly time for the postman, and perhaps I shall get a nice letter to charm away my melancholy mood. (*Takes up paper.*)

(*Enter MR. MERTIL, R., sees his wife.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Ha! my wife is here, I must control myself. (*To her.*) Well, Fannie, here I am quite unexpectedly.

MRS. M. (*starting up and running to him*). O Harry, what a pleasure! How glad I am to see you! (*They embrace.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). What an excellent actress she is, indeed! but of course she hasn't seen the postal yet.

MRS. M. (*taking off his hat and gloves*). But how did you happen to get home? (*Carries the hat and gloves to table while MR. M. removes his outer coat and hangs it on a tripod or other convenience in a corner.*)

MR. M. Well, you see my business all moved off with unusual smoothness. (*Both return to C.*)

MRS. M. (*putting her hand on his arm*). And I was just hoping the postman would bring me a letter from you. By the way, it must be time for him.

MR. M. Yes, he was just crossing the street as I came up the steps (*aside*), which is quite true.

MRS. M. Oh, then, I'll run into the hall and see if I have any mail. (*Exit R.*)

MR. M. Evidently her husband is not her only correspondent. Well (*walking about moodily*), how often have I said jokingly that a man who comes home unexpectedly takes his fate in his own hands. Little did I imagine I would ever realize the truth of my idle words. (*Sighs.*)

(*Enter JANE, L.*)

JANE. Oh, Mr. Mertil, you frightened me. I didn't know you were at home. I am looking for Mrs. Mertil.

MR. M. She went into the hall a moment ago.

JANE (*turning to go*). Oh, well, I can wait.

MR. M. Don't be in a hurry, Jane, I want to speak to you. (*Aside.*) How shall I approach her? (*To her.*) You are a very good girl, Jane (*takes a roll of bills from his pocket*), and I would like very much indeed to make you a little present.

JANE (*interrupting sharply*). I don't want any of your little presents, so please keep them to yourself, sir.

MR. M. (*aside*). H'm, spirited. Well, it will not do to stop now. (*To her.*) Jane, don't be offended when no offence was intended. I simply want to ask a favor of you, and, as you have always been so good a girl

and have done many little kindnesses for Mrs. Mertil, I think you really deserve a little extra pay now and then, that is all.

JANE. I am willing to do you the favor if I can, but I don't want any pay for it : so make it known quick, for I am in a great hurry with my work.

MR. M. Well, then, tell me this. Who are the most frequent visitors here when I am away?

JANE. That's easy enough to tell. Mrs. Jones, I think, comes the most often of any one, then Mrs. Binns comes quite often too, and there's —

MR. M. But, among *my* friends, whom do you remember seeing?

JANE (*surprised*). Your friends? Why, indeed, sir, I don't remember as any of *your* friends come to see Mrs. Mertil. Why should they?

MR. M. (*embarrassed*). Oh, they might come to — er — to — er — call, you know. There's Mr. Foster, now, you know him, don't you?

JANE. Oh, yes, sir, I know him : but I've never seen him here except of an evening with his wife, and when you were at home, sir, too.

MR. M. Oh, well, that is all, Jane. You are sure you have named all of my wife's intimate friends?

JANE (*reflecting*). Well, yes, I think so, sir. Oh, there's Miss Feltonbough. She's here pretty often.

MR. M. Feltonbough! Why, that is some one I never heard of before; she must be a very new acquaintance. Who is she, and what is she like?

JANE (*laughing*). Well, sir, she's funny enough. I've never seen her face, for she always wears a heavy veil :

but she has a funny form and funny ways. She seems just like a man with a woman's toggery on.

MR. M. (*aside*). Ah! can it be the girl has blundered into the truth? I begin to fear it, for Foster is a small man, and in woman's clothes would look very like an overgrown female. (*To JANE.*) But you may go now, Jane, and if you will please not to tell any one of the questions I have asked you, I will be very grateful to you.

JANE. All right, sir, I will remember. (*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter MRS. M., R., wearing a white apron.*)

MR. M. Well, my dear, you have been a good while. Have you been giving chase to the mail-carrier?

MRS. M. (*laughing*). Oh, no. I went up-stairs to put on a fresh collar and this apron. Isn't it pretty? It is one that I have just finished.

MR. M. Very pretty, indeed. But my dear, could you have Jane make me a cup of tea? I have eaten nothing since breakfast except a light lunch taken on the train.

MRS. M. I will make it for you myself; come into the dining-room with me, and I will refresh you, you poor, hungry man. (*Takes his arm affectionately.*) How stupid of me not to think sooner that you might possibly be hungry. (*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter JANE, R., carrying an illustrated paper.*)

JANE. So she isn't here, either. Well, if I can't find her I am not to blame. I've been all over the house, so I'll jist sit down here and read a while. (*Sits.*) I'm glad enough to get a minute's time to read, for I'm right in the midst of this chapter where that

dreadful old stepfather carries off the beautiful Ada. But, what on earth can have got into Mr. Mertil to ask me so many questions about his wife's callers? I've lived here more than a year, and I never knew him to do such a thing before. He seemed to think there was something queer about Miss Feltonbough, and that's just what I have thought this long time. Why does she always keep her veil down, and why does Mrs. Mertil take her up to her own room instead of taking her to the parlor or sitting-room as she does with her other callers? There's something queer about it, and the queerest thing of all is, that Mr. Mertil is so suspicious. (*Sits lost in thought a moment, then starts up suddenly, dropping paper.*) Oh, oh, I just thought of it! I do believe she is a man dressed up in woman's clothes; wouldn't that be awful? What an exciting time there would be. Better than any story. (*Bell rings.*) There, maybe she is here now. Well, I'll just watch out a little. (*Runs out, R.*)

(*Enter MRS. MERTIL, L.*)

MRS. M. I suppose Jane has gone to the door. Dear me, what if it should be she? (*Takes postal card from pocket.*) Yes, she says at three o'clock (*looks at watch*), and it now lacks only a few minutes of that hour. I hope Jane will have sense enough to take her up-stairs as usual. Harry will not go up there, now, I think, for he said he was in a hurry to go down town as soon as he is done eating.

(*Enter JANE, R.*)

JANE. Mrs. Mertil, the man has come to mend the window-sash in your room. Shall I send him up?

MRS. M. (*nervously*). Why, yes, Jane, of course ; but, dear me, the room will be cold with the window out (*exit* JANE, R.), and, of course, I shall have to entertain *her* in here. Dear me, I wish poor Harry would hurry away. But I must go back and see if he has finished his lunch. (*Exit*, L.)

(*Enter* JANE, R., *laughing*.)

JANE. Oh dear, oh dear, how funny to have that man come now of all times when we've been waiting for him for a whole week. I just know by the way Mrs. Mertil acts that she expects Miss Feltonbough. Well, I don't wonder she's nervous with her bedroom window out and that man up-stairs too. Oh, how I hope Mr. Mertil will not go away, until after she comes. Why, it's grand, just like a story.

(*Enter* MRS. MERTIL, L.)

MRS. M. Did you take the man up-stairs, Jane ?

JANE. Yes'm.

MRS. M. Well, I must go up and look after him a little. (*Exit hastily*, R.)

(*Enter* MR. M., L.)

MR. M. Oh, Jane, you are the very one that I most want to see. Where do Mrs. Mertil and Miss Feltonbough sit when she is here ?

JANE. Always up-stairs, sir ; but if she should happen to come to-day they'll have to sit in here, because, you see, the man is mending the window up-stairs, and the room is cold. Mrs. Mertil would never take her into the parlor, because other callers are liable to come in, and Miss Feltonbough is so funny looking, you know.

MR. M. Oh, yes, I see ; well, I have good reason to

think Miss Feltonbough is coming to-day. So I'll just go over to the drug store and watch for her appearance. When I see her I'll come back and be introduced to her. But you needn't mention the matter to Mrs. Mertil, for I want it to be a surprise to her. Now remember! (*Exit, R.*)

JANE (*clapping her hands and dancing about*). Oh, yes, I'll remember. Dear me, how interesting and exciting it is all getting. Oh, I do hope Miss Feltonbough is a man. Talk about stories!

(*Enter MRS. M., R.*)

MRS. M. Jane, where is Mr. Mertil?

JANE. He came through here and I heard the front door shut soon after.

MRS. M. (*goes to L.*). He must be gone then. (*Aside.*) Gone without a single word of good-by to me. What in the world can have come over him? Surely, I cannot have offended him in any way. Well, he is safely out of Miss Feltonbough's way: there is some consolation in that, at least. She will certainly be here soon. (*Bell rings; to JANE.*) Go to the door, Jane, and if that is Miss Feltonbough bring her in here. (*Exit JANE, R.*) Dear me, I have had a narrow escape, indeed. She and Harry might easily have met on the doorstep. Well, I don't believe I'll take any more such risks, not even for the sake of — (*Enter MISS FELTONBOUGH, R.; she carries a large book.*) And so you have come. (*They shake hands. MISS F. sits in a chair which MRS. M. places at C., with back towards R. entrance; she gives the book to MRS. M. and then removes her bonnet and veil, which MRS. M. lays on the table.*)

And so this wonderful book is in my hands at last !
(*Opens and reads from title page.*) "The Woman's Hierarchy, by Miss Georgiana Feltonbough." How lovely that I should at last know a real live authoress. Oh, what fun it must be to be able to write books.
(*Turns leaves of book and keeps her eyes on it.*)

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*in a hard, nasal tone*). Fun ! Much you know about it ! If you could only imagine the days and nights of thought and toil represented by that book.

(MR. M. *enters, cautiously, R.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Yes, yes, that is he ; I know that shock of sandy hair too well to make a mistake.

MISS FELTONBOUGH. But of course that you can never understand. To your sheltered and easy life, no suspicion — (MR. MERTIL *dashes forward, grasps MISS FELTONBOUGH from behind and presses her face close against his vest. MRS. M. screams and drops book. MISS F. struggles to her feet, still held by MR. M. with his left arm ; with his right hand he pounds her on the back. Enter JANE, L. Whole situation as ludicrous as possible.*)

JANE (*clapping her hands*). Give it to him, give it to him, Mr. Mertil : I knew it all along, I did, I did.

MRS. M. (*shocked*). Give it to *him* ! Why, Jane, what on earth can you mean ? (*Goes to her husband and throws herself on his right arm.*) O Harry, Harry ! do stop, you will kill the poor woman.

MR. MERTIL (*loosens his hold on MISS F., who straightens herself and confronts him*). Oh, oh ! why it isn't — (*Turns away and drops his head.*)

hand, or the feelings of his small sister, as he grows older, on the subject of her inevitable skirts and pigtails!

JACK (*loftily*). You speak advisedly when you mention small girls and butterflies in the same breath! Allow me to suggest that *large* girls might be placed under the same head! The crushing process goes on, it strikes me, with more force, the older they grow—the butterfly coming out ahead every time!

PRUE (*leaning forward, pretends to be puzzled*). You mean? Excuse me, Jack, possibly I am rather stupid, but would you mind saying that again? It seemed rather vague, and I think I failed to catch your meaning exactly.

JACK (*rises, leans over her chair*). I mean then, that a girl crushes in the palm of her dainty little hand the heart and life of a man, or as many men as may happen to please her fancy for a fleeting moment, and tosses them away like airy nothings when it suits her pleasure to do so, as a butterfly flits about from flower to flower, sipping all that is best in their lives, to put it to no purpose! (*Crosses L.*)

PRUE (*surprised, laughs gaily. Rises and follows him*). Why, Jack, are you quite sure you are feeling well? Really I am alarmed about you! Would you prefer a mustard plaster for your spine, or an ice-cold bandage for your head? *That*, I think would be best to relieve the pressure of the brain which you are evidently struggling under! (*Laughing.*)

JACK (*turning, moodily*). Oh, you may laugh if you please, but it's all true nevertheless! Cruelty to dumb animals in a small, thoughtless boy may be reprehensible, I admit, but the cruelty inflicted on the human heart by thoughtless girls is something which never dies! (*Retires up stage, C.*)

PRUE (*innocently*). And are men never cruel in the way you mention? How about the—(*beginning to count on fingers*) *how* many pairs of eyes of varied hues which have smiled at you so appealingly and in vain this past year? Oh, Jack, how *could* you!

JACK (*rather taken aback*). Oh, well, little affairs of that sort, that are only skin deep, they do no harm!

PRUE (*solemnly*). Ah! You do not know! How many blighted lives *you* may have to answer for, who can tell? It is a far more serious affair, *I* think, from the standpoint of your sex than mine!

JACK. As you will. (*Apart.*) I suppose she's waiting for me to go, but I'm not going to give Guthrie a chance till noon-

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*coldly*). I don't know how foolish it was, but you'll find out to your sorrow that it was the most *serious* mistake you ever made in your life.

MR. M. Well, now, Miss F., let's come to some settlement. Of course the law will give you damages, but we may as well cheat the lawyers and courts out of their fees and settle the thing for ourselves. (*Takes checkbook from his pocket.*) Jane, go and get the pen and ink. - (*Exit JANE, L.*) Now, Miss Feltonbough, just say how much you will take to drop the matter?

MISS FELTONBOUGH. I am not to be bought, sir. Indeed, no amount can pay me for the indignity that I have suffered at your hands.

(*Enter JANE with pen and ink. MR. M. sits at table and prepares to write.*)

MR. M. That is true, but the courts would give you damages which I am sure you would not refuse, and of course you can always use money for "the cause." Come, now, I am sure you can use two hundred dollars to good advantage. (*Writes rapidly.*)

MISS F. (*smiling*). Yes, indeed, Mr. Mertil, I can do a great deal with so generous a sum.

MR. M. (*aside*). Buy herself some decent toggery, I hope, poor thing. (*To her.*) There, Miss Feltonbough, there is my check, and my humble apologies with it. (*Rises and hands check.*)

MISS F. (*taking it*). And don't you want my receipt exonerating you from all claims from me?

MR. M. Not at all. I know you are an honorable woman and will never refer to the matter again.

(*Offering him new book.*) Here's my new book. Couldn't you get up a little interest in it; even if you're not in it yourself? (*Stands facing him.*)

JACK (*gloomily, and not at all interested*). I suppose all your latest acquisitions are faithfully depicted here. Thank goodness that *my* lines are not cast among them! (*Turning leaves.*) What in thunder did you see in this string of homely chaps to want to paste them in here? (PRUE *secretly amused*.) Here's Guthrie, happy man! His the honor of being latest in your favor, and in your scrap-book! (*Closes book, rises, crosses, R.*)

PRUE (*following; enthusiastically*). Oh, Mr. Guthrie is so lovely!

JACK (*glumly*). So I noticed last night. Positively seraphic!

PRUE. Did you really have time to notice him at all? Doesn't he dance divinely? (*Dances a few steps.*) And he plays tennis whenever I want him to, and is always ready to go driving or walking. He's the kindest man!

JACK. Must be! Why isn't he here now dispensing his charity? He might have enough even for a poor beggar like me! Well, Prue! (*Taking up his cap.*) I must catch the noon train. My morning hasn't been spent very profitably, after all, but I've done my best, and I've gotten your forgiveness, although you will not own it! (*Stands back of table.*) I suppose it's my own fault, not being a worthier fellow, that I have nothing better to carry away with me.

PRUE (*stands in front of table. She has grown quiet during his speech, and looks away*). Then you are not coming over next week?

JACK. No—nor never again!

PRUE (*advancing a little, and clasping her hands nervously*). Jack!

JACK. Well?

PRUE (*timidly*). Will you go to Daisy's picnic with me, Jack?

JACK (*excitedly casts down his cap and goes towards her*). Prue! But only engaged people are allowed at that!

PRUE (*archly*). Well?—No, no! (*Waving him away.*) I said *for the picnic*! (*She runs across room to easy-chair, runs around it turning it so the back is towards centre stage. JACK follows, kneels in chair, facing her, both laughing.*) Until then you belong to Maud! You really must be punished in



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

BELLA *The young lady hostess*

LOU

ELLA

MARY

EMILY

GRACE

JULIA

FANNIE

Young ladies, residents of the same town and acquainted with each other. They are also Bella's guests.

COSTUMES.

Any tasteful dresses that may be suitably worn at a small evening party. Hats and wraps are worn on entering. The latter should of course correspond with the season, and are to be laid aside at the proper time.



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

SCENE. — *A parlor. Eight chairs must be placed carelessly about so that the occupants will be within easy speaking distance of one another and yet not too far from C. Curtain rises. BELLA enters L, and sits.*

BELLA. To think that at last, at long, long last, this village really possesses a full-grown, live, rational, young man! I can hardly realize it. To be sure, we have had Tom Jones, and Harry Spar, and John Smith, the first and second not yet out of their teens, the last a forlorn widower of forty. But now, O joy! here is an eligible young man of not more than twenty-three or four. Tall, handsome, dark-eyed, a lawyer, and with — Oh, *such* a moustache! Dear me! I can hardly wait until I see him entering the room. (*A door-bell rings behind the scenes. BELLA starts up.*) Oh, I do hope that is he! What a charming *tête-à-tête* we may have before the other girls get here! (*Enter LOU, R. BELLA rushes to meet her. They embrace.*)

BELLA (*motioning L.*). Just step in here, Lou, and remove your wraps, and arrange your hair. (*Exit LOU, L.*) I might have known that Lou would be the

first one on hand. Of course that is her privilege, as she is my most intimate friend. (*Re-enter LOU, L. They both sit near C. as LOU speaks.*)

LOU. So, I am the first arrival. I did not expect to be. I thought the girls would all arrive early. O Bella! if you only knew the stir those invitations "to meet Mr. Thompson" have created in this stupid little burgh.

BELLA. Nonsense, Lou! why should it?

LOU. Why should it? Oh, now, Bella, don't pretend not to know that Mr. Thompson is the most delightful, most irresistible, most rare creature ever seen in this huddle called by courtesy a "town."

BELLA. So you have seen him? (*The bell rings. They both spring up, rush to centre, and exclaim together, excitedly, "There he is!" Enter ELLA, R. They rush forward, embrace her, and she is directed by BELLA into the adjoining room, as was LOU. Exit ELLA, L. BELLA and LOU resume seats.*)

LOU. Of course *Ella* would be here on time. I don't suppose cables and chains could have kept her at home to-night.

BELLA. Well, all of my invitations have been accepted. I don't suppose any of the girls would miss coming.

LOU. Unless it may be those whom you forgot to invite.

(*ELLA enters in time to hear the last word.*)

ELLA (*sits near the others*). And how many have you invited, Bella?

BELLA. Only nine.

ELLA }
and } Nine!
LOU. }

LOU. Poor Mr. Thompson!

ELLA. He will not live to tell the tale.

BELLA. I begin to think he foresees the danger, and that his instincts of self-preservation are too strong to admit of his coming.

(The bell rings again. They all start to their feet, and exclaim, "There he is!" as before. Enter MARY. Repeat as on ELLA'S entrance. BELLA directs as before. Exit MARY, L. The others resume seats.)

ELLA. Of course *Mary* would come, trust her for that. Indeed, Bella, it is very generous of you to give all of us girls the pleasure of Mr. Thompson's acquaintance. *(Enter MARY.)* Almost any other girl would have kept his society for herself.

MARY *(approaches the others, and sits)*. But, we must have met him sometime, and, of course, she prefers to have the performance take place under her supervision, as it were.

LOU. Then, I think she will be disappointed, for *I* don't believe he's coming.

(The bell rings. All start up as before, repeat exclamation, etc. Enter EMILY, R. Repeat all "business" as on entrance of others. Exit EMILY, L. Others resume their places.)

MARY. Oh, I knew *she* would be here! It's so long since she's seen a young man, she *(enter EMILY, L.)* forgets how one looks.

EMILY *(coming forward)*. What is that? Who forgets how what looks? *(Sits near others.)*

BELLA. We all have forgotten how a full-grown, live young man looks.

EMILY. Well, where is your curiosity? Why don't you bring him out?

LOU. We await his royal pleasure.

(Bell as before. Repeat former business fully. Enter GRACE, R. Repeat as for others. Exit GRACE, L. The others resume their seats.)

EMILY. Oh, I knew *Grace* would come. She has been on what the boys call a "still hunt" for a (*enter GRACE, L.*) young man for nobody knows how long.

GRACE (*as she comes to the others, and sits*). Who has been a young man for nobody knows how long? Surely, not Mr. Thompson?

BELLA. Oh, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

LOU. Oh, dear, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

ELLA. No indeed! not *Mr. Thompson*.

MARY. Oh, my, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

EMILY. Why, certainly not *Mr. Thompson*. (*These answers must be very emphatic.*)

BELLA. I conclude you have not seen him, Grace?

GRACE. Seen him? Indeed, I haven't. I have *heard* of nothing else for the last two weeks but Mr. Thompson. Is he handsome?

ALL IN CONCERT. Handsome! handsome! Oh, oh, oh!—oh, oh, oh!

GRACE. Dear me, what a wonder he must be! But why doesn't he come? (*Bell, as before. Repeat former "business." Enter JULIA, R., as before. Exit JULIA, L. The others resume seats.*)

Grand. [*laughs*]. To be sure! [*Sits.*] What a good memory you have. Won't you sit a little, Mr. Rowland.

Row. [*sits*]. And do you remember how we used to go lily-gathering? Just this time of the year, was n't it? I never saw a flower I liked so well. What bunches we would find! I have not seen one since I left for Oxford. I wish I could remember where they used to grow.

Grand. [*knitting*]. Nathalie shall gather a bunch, and I will bring them to the Hall to-morrow. Then I can see the Squire about a place for Nathalie, too.

Row. [*hastily*]. I will speak to him about the place myself. I shall be glad to have the lilies. Still, to gather them myself would bring the old times so strongly to mind, when I used to come down from the Hall, bringing you a nice jelly. I will send you one to-morrow. [*Rises.*] I wish I could remember where those lilies grew.

Grand. Well, if Nathalie is going to gather you a bunch, you might go with her, I suppose; then she could show you the way.

Row. Thank you. Shall I come to-morrow?

Grand. Perhaps you'd better go now.

Row. I should be delighted. Come, Nathalie. [*Nath. rises and puts on hat.*] Thank you for the kind permission, mother. I will send the jelly to-morrow. Good-bye. [*Exeunt.*]

Grand. Oh, dear! oh, dear! [*Drops knitting and hurries to door, wringing hands.*] What have I done now? Let them go off together, all alone; and I proposed it! They, do just as they please with me!

[*Comes down.*] But I'll remember it! They shall not go again, that they shan't. Well [*picks up work*], it was not kind to refuse to let her go. I can't be rude to the young Squire, he is so good, always bringing me nice things, and with ever a kind word to the poor old bodies in the village. Well, well, we'll let it go now, and see what turns up. But they shan't go again!

CURTAIN.

SCENE V. — *Parlor at the Hall. Squire and Rowland.*

Row. Well, uncle, I have visited Miss Murdoch steadily for four weeks, and am well satisfied with the sensation I have produced. Would it not be well to offer myself. I feel impatient to learn my fate.

Sq. Yes, Rowland; make love hand over hand. Ah! you're a boy after my own heart. And now strike while the iron is hot, and we'll snap our fingers at sadness. [*Row. and Sq. cross.*]

Row. I scarcely know how to introduce the subject to so dignified a lady. Suppose I write; she will appreciate my delicacy.

Sq. No difference. An offer is an offer, whether made on paper or by word of mouth. Draw up your document, and let me see it.

Row. Excuse me one moment and I will bring it.
[*Exit, L.*]

Sq. [*walks about, rubbing hands*]. There's a fine fellow, now! Ah! there's nothing like keeping a tight rein on these young colts. The fellow was skittish at

first, and showed signs of bolting. [*Laughs at his own wit.*] But I kept him well in hand, and now he's as ardent over his courting as anyone could wish. Ah! it will be pleasant to hear a young voice ringing through the Hall once more. [*Sighs, and loses himself in thought.*] So here comes our young lover. [*Enter Row., L.*] Now for the proposal. Read it! read it!

Row. [*reads*]:

MY DEAR MISS MURDOCH,—

I have visited you now for several weeks, and, having carefully studied your character, make bold to offer you my hand, trusting to your affectionate nature to receive the offer favorably. Do not keep me long in this painful suspense, but return an answer by bearer to

Yours most anxiously,

R. H.

Row. Will that do?

Sq. Humph! Yes. [*Crosses over.*] Hardly as loving and ardent as I would have it; but you know best, Rowland. Send it off! Send it off! I am more in a hurry now for an answer than you are. [*Snatches letter. Exit, R.*]

Row. That can scarcely be, for I am really on tenterhooks. But it cannot be that the scheme will miscarry. I am sure that I read such disgust and intolerance in Miss Stella's face, upon my last call, that I really did not dare put in another appearance lest I should be booted from the door. But, heigho! it is a dangerous experiment to try. [*Exit, L.*]

[*A little pause before enters Sq., R.*]

Sq. Oh! "there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream." And I dreamed it once myself!

I, grizzly, bald-headed Hugo Hinsdale, had my dream of young love, my visions of matrimonial bliss, and my rude awakening. Nothing is left me now but the memory of that fair, stately presence — those soft clinging gowns, that never rustled nor hitched to things as she walked — that clear, sweet, penetrating voice! Ah! Alice! Alice! How your sunny presence would have glorified these old rooms! How your voice would have echoed in song along the dim corridors, and your cheerful laughter shamed the ugly old cockatoo into good humor! But interference! interference! Cursed interference! We were separated forever! [*Sighs.*] Then it was I vowed that I would never interfere in a love affair; never dictate to, nor attempt to control youth's wayward passions. When two hearts are drawn together, the impulse is from heaven, and the sordid calculations of this lower world ought never to outweigh that fine gold with its earthly dross! Ahem!

[*Enter footman in livery, R.*]

Footman. Here's the answer, sir. [*Exit.*]

Sq. Ah! Rowland! Rowland! you dog! [*Calls off, L.*] Rowland, my dear boy, here's your answer. [*Enter Row.*] Here's Miss Stella's letter. Open it! Read it! Lucky boy! I'm sure she'll have you. [*Aside.*] He's fairly pale with emotion. Poor fellow! How deeply in love he is.

[*Row. reads to himself, then hands letter to Sq., and walks across stage with folded arms. Speaks, aside.*]

Row. How can I conceal my joy? How can I dissemble?

Sq. What the deuce! What does this mean? She

can't have refused you! [*Reads.*] RESPECTED SIR: Ahem! rather cool, that!

Row. Cool, but polite. I do not dislike the expression, but feel honored by her respect. Read on, uncle.

Sq. [*reads*]. Allow me to thank you for the honor you have conferred by asking me to become Mrs. Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall — [Ahem! Rather premature! Squire Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall is still above ground, let me tell her! However, no harm done. Mrs. Hinsdale of Hinsdale Hall! Sounds well, I must confess. Suits Miss Stella, too, eh?]

Row. Go on, uncle.

Sq. [*reads*]. And rest assured that, though I cannot accept it — [What! Cannot accept it?] I remain, with sentiments of esteem — [Psh! Bosh! Confound her sentiments. Refuse you! good-looking and agreeable fellow as you are; and heir to such a property, too. I declare I've half a mind to turn you out of doors. You didn't half court her.]

Row. But uncle —

Sq. You are a disgrace to the family! Refuse you! Sha!

Row. It might have been a previous attachment.

Sq. No, 'tain't! I found that out before I advised your courtship. It's just you, yourself, that's the matter. It's *you* she refuses, not the Hall, nor the money, nor the cross bachelor uncle. Ha! ha! ha! But you, *you*, you! I know all about her. A true lady. She would just have suited you. But you couldn't suit her. Poor fellow! I pity you! Can't get married! Humph! Why don't you go offer your-

self to Nathalie, at the cottage? Perhaps *she* will have you! I'd try it, by all means! Ha! ha! ha!

Row. [*aside*]. Uncle's advice must always be followed. [*Exit, R.*]

Sq. Where's the poor fellow gone? Out to walk in the park, I suppose. Well, 't is rough on him, but we mustn't give it up so. We can find some other young lady as good as Miss Stella. Yes, dozens of them. What could have possessed her? Why, he's a perfect picture of what I was at his age, and I was a terrible fellow among the girls! Terrible! Why, I could have had my pick of the county.

[*Enter Rowland.*]

Row. She says she'll have me. [*Laughs.*]

Sq. What! Who says she'll have you?

Row. [*innocently*]. Why, Nathalie Gwynne.

Sq. Nathalie Gwynne! Mother Gwynne's daughter?

Row. To be sure. I thought there was no chance of getting any one else, and as you advised me to offer myself to her, I —

Sq. Confound it all! You have not been such a fool? [*Sq. and Row. cross.*]

Row. I followed your advice, sir.

Sq. My advice! You are a blockhead! I did not mean it; you might have known it. Nathalie Gwynne! [*Walks about stage.*] You shall never marry her! Never! Confusion! Did you offer yourself?

Row. I did, uncle, honestly. And she accepted me. Says she has always loved me. It will break her heart to tell her I was only trifling — that I did not mean it.

Sq. It has a bad look. But what can be done?

Row. Nathalie is a worthy girl. And she expects to become my wife. I cannot break with her — a good girl.

Sq. But poor.

Row. So am I. The only difference between us is that she has no good, kind Uncle Hinsdale! She is handsome, and that is the first quality necessary in a wife!

Sq. Humph!

Row. She is spirited! [*Sq. nods.*] Intelligent! [*Nods.*] We can procure teachers, and accomplish her at the Hall! [*Nods.*] All but rich, and your wealth is sufficient for us both.

Sq. Humph!

Row. She is an orphan, too; and what will become of her when her old grandmother dies? So young and lovely, alone in the world!

Sq. Poor child! It would be bad for her. Yes, it would.

Row. Then, uncle, she knows you, and all your ways — which a stranger would not — and would be more willing to let things be as they are. She really loves you.

Sq. [*laughing*]. Why, you dog! I believe you followed your own inclination, as well as my advice, when you proposed to little Nathalie. Confess you love her.

Row. [*in great confusion*]. Yes, uncle, I love Nathalie.

Sq. Ha! ha! Well, then, I made a lucky hit with my advice, that time. I shouldn't wonder if she suited

us better than Miss Stella. You're a fortunate fellow, after all. [*Slaps him on the back.*] Ha! ha! ha! Trust your uncle to find a wife for you. And now get married — get married as soon as you can. I must hear the gay young voice ringing through the house. Shake hands with me, boy. [*Shake hands.*] Come, come, let us go to the cottage. I want to see my new niece that is to be.

CURTAIN.

SCENE VI. — *Cottage. Nathalie alone. Rowland enters, l.*

Row. Nathalie, darling Nathalie! Uncle has given his consent to our marriage!

Nath. Rowland! [*Throws herself into his arms.*]

Row. Now I can in truth call you mine. Now there is nothing to part us.

[*They come down, Row.'s arm about waist of Nath. Enter uncle, l. Row. and Nath. walk across stage, r.*]

Sq. [*aside*]. How happy the young people are. I wish everybody could get married. [*Rubs hands.*] Wish I was married myself! [*Laughs. Row. and Nath. turn. Sq. opens arms.*] My children! [*They come toward him.*]

Row. My uncle! Bless our betrothal. [*They kneel.*]

Sq. My dear children, may all good befall you; may unnumbered blessings rest upon you.

[*Enter Grandma, l. Speaks as she enters.*]

Grand. Nathalie, did I see that young — [*Holds*

up hands; drops into chair.] For mercy's sake! —
[Row. and Nath. rise and approach Grand. Sq.
crosses, wiping eyes.]

Row. Mother, will you give me your little Nathalie, with Uncle Hinsdale's blessing?

Grand. Humph! Young sir, your uncle will never give it!

Sq. [turns]. Yes, he will! yes, he will!

Grand. [starts up]. The old Squire! He too! — Well, well, well! wonders will never cease. *[Clasps their hands.]* Take her, Mr. Rowland. I give her to you, gladly. *[Turns away.]* And 't is a great weight off my shoulders.

[Row., with arm about Nath., crosses R. Sq. crosses L, and shakes hands with Grandma. While they converse in dumb show, enter (L.) Miss S. and Madge. They advance to back, c.]

Madge. [stopping on threshold]. Good gracious! there 'll be tantrums now! *[Gets behind Miss S.]*

Miss S. What do my eyes behold? Is this the lover methought broken-hearted? Ah, me!

“ He looked upon *her* beauty, and forgot,
As in a sense of drowning, all things else.
O most unhappy me, he loved me not !”

“ The bee thro' many a garden roves,
And hums his lay of courtship o'er ;
But when he finds the flower he loves,
He settles there, and hums no more.”

[Comes down.]

Sq. Ah! good morning. *[Shakes hands.]* Good morning. Miss Stella, we have to thank you for — for — a great pleasure. Good morning.

[*Shakes hands with Madge, who stares, surprised.*]

Miss S.

"Let Fate do her worst ; there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy."

Sq. What ! what ! What did you say, my dear madam ?

Miss S.

"O doubt me not, the season
Is o'er when Folly made me rove,
And now the vestal Reason
Shall watch the fires of love.
Altho' this heart was early blown,
And fairest hands [*waving toward Row.*] disturb'd the tree,
They only shook some blossoms down ;
Its fruit has all been kept for thee."

[*Places her hand in Squire's. Grand. sits, grumbling, L.*]

Sq. [*aside*]. The deuce it has ! [*Aloud.*] Ahem ! Allow me to present to you my future niece. [*Nath. courtseys.*]

Miss S. [*waving her away*]. Some future time, perhaps, but not to-day. The wounds of memory are yet too fresh, and slightest cause may make them bleed anew !

Sq. [*aside*]. H'm ! h'm ! I'm glad she would n't have him. What the young dog found in her to love I can't conceive ! Why, little Nathalie has twice the sense, and breeding, too, for that matter. Trust *my* judgment !

Miss S. [*walking about with clasped hands and upturned eyes*]. I will write a poem upon this momentous occasion ; an epithalamium which shall make my

name immortal. Listen! I hear the harmonies of heaven! [*Strikes tragic attitude, c., front.*]

Madge [*pulling at her*]. Come down *here*, Miss Stella! We live on earth! Why don't you speak to young Mr. Hinsdale?

Miss S. Child, to what memories do you bring me! [*Aside.*] And shall I congratulate *them*? [*To Row.*]

“When I met thee, warm and young,
 There shone such truth about thee,
 And on thy lips such promise hung,
 I did not dare to doubt thee.
 But go, deceiver! go!
 The heart whose hopes could make it
 Trust one so false, so low,
 Deserves that thou shouldst break it.”

Mr. Hinsdale [*sitting, aside*]. I should just like to know one thing,—who did the courting, and who did the refusing? [*Aloud.*] Miss Stella, I know some poetry—some fine poetry—listen!

“Higgle-te-piggle-te-pot,
 The dog has ate the mop,
 The cat's —”

Miss S. [*fainting*]. Catch me, Madge! My sensitive soul cannot endure such a profanation of the divine art. [*Leans heavily upon Madge, who can scarce support the weight. Nath. looks concerned. Row. fans her with hat. Grand. bustles forward.*]

Grand. Get the camfire! get the camfire, child!

Sq. Fiddle-de-dee! [*Rising.*] Fetch her up to the Hall, and give her a good square meal of bride's cake and wine! Come, all of you! We'll have a wedding before night. [*Miss S. slowly recovers.*]

Nath. Oh! Mr. Hinsdale! That is too soon!

Row. I always obey my uncle!

Madge. Good boy!

Sq. Nathalie, I have much to be thankful for.
[*Shakes her hand.*] Rowland, old boy! [*claps him on back*] you will do well to *always* obey your uncle. Come, mother. [*Offers arm to Grandma.*] Come on, come on. [*Exeunt Sq., Grand., Row., and Nath.* *Miss S. looks after them tragically.*]

Miss S.

“Farewell! and whenever you welcome the hour
That awak’ns the night song of mirth in your bower,
Then think of the friend who once welcomed it, too,
And forgot her own griefs, to be happy with you.”

Come, Madge, they have everything good at the Hall; we may as well go, too.

Madge [*smacks lips*]. Miss Stella, there is great consolation in a nice dinner.

CURTAIN.

The Play may close here, or conclude with

SCENE VII. — *Performance of Wedding March, in the midst of which curtain rises upon tableau — The Wedding of Rowland and Nathalie. Stage should be set for parlor at the Hall. Cottage in first grooves, which can be easily transformed into Miss S.’s sanctum.*

A BUNCH OF BUTTERCUPS.

CHARACTERS.

FOUR WOMEN, TWO MEN, ONE LITTLE GIRL.

Music: BUTTERCUP'S SONG.

[*Enter, L., pretty Dutch girl, in national costume, with basket of laces on her arm. Sings:—*]

I's galled leedle Pootergub,
Dear leedle Pootergub,
Dough I gant nefer dells vy.
Poot shtill I's galled Pootergub,
Dear leedle Pootergub,
Shveet leedle Pootergub, I.

[*Passes off, R., as enter, L., darky woman. Sings:—*]

Dis chile am called Buttercup,
Dee leetle Buttercup,
Dough I does n't never know why;
But still I's called Buttercup,
Lily-white Buttercup,
Mos' lubly Buttercup, me.

[*Passes off, R., as enter, L., Irishman, in national costume. Sings:—*]

It's mesilf that's called Boothercoop,
 Dear little Boothercoop,
 Though it bothers me head to tell why;
 But the ladies (bless 'em!) are afther callin' me
 Boothercoop,
 Shwate little Boothercoop,
 Arrah! it's mesilf that's the Boothercoop
 bh'y.

[*Passes off, R., as enter, L., Chinaman (hold the outer corners of eyes up with forefingers, to give them obliquity). Sings:—*]

Mi am alwiz callee Buttleclup,
 Dee leedle Buttleclup,
 Allee samee mi nevee 'll dell why.
 Steel mi am callee Buttleclup,
 Dee leedle Buttleclup,
 Sweetee leedle Buttleclup, mi.

[*Exit, R. Enter, L., Scotch lassie. Sings:—*]

I am callit wee Buttercup,
 Dear little Buttercup,
 I hope none will spier o' me why!
 For I'm always call't Buttercup,
 Bonnie, bright Buttercup,
 Wee, blinkin' Buttercup, I.

[*Exit, R. Enter, L., old French tambourine woman. Speaks:—*]

Von leedle twenty-five cents, dear messieurs and
 sweet ladies! Von leedle twenty-five cents for de
 pauvre orphan whose farder and mooder die in der last

war. Oh, gif to me for der loof of sweet charitee, for
[*sings and dances to tambourine*] —

J'suis jamais call Buttercup,
Chère petite Buttercup,
Dough I nevair tells you pourquoi;
Mais still je suis Buttercup,
Chère petite Buttercup,
Most charmant Buttercup, moi!

Twenty-five cents, most charitable messieurs and mes-
dames! [*Exit, L., jingling tambourine, and speaking
as she goes.*]

[*The various exits and entrances being through the
near entrances, enter now from R. U. E., little girl dressed
in green and yellow, to represent a buttercup blossom.
Buttercup hat, made of yellow board cut in ten scallops to
represent ten petals, green sepals turned back over crown,
green stem hanging over. Pink hose, green slip-
pers. Basket of battercups and grasses. Runs down,
sings: —*]

I'm the real little Buttercup,
Dear little Buttercup,
I'm thinking you all can tell why.
For I'm always called Buttercup,
Dear little Buttercup,
Sweet little Buttercup I.

[*Enter, R. U. E., actors in reverse order, headed by
tambourine woman. Form in semicircle around little
girl, sing in concert their various stanzas.*]

Curtain.

GRES. We'll paint the town pink, Maud Alice—as pink as we can for—let's see. (*Takes money out of pocket.*) Seven and fourpence. We'll go to Madame Tussaud's—and we'll go there in a taxi.

M. A. Oh, Mr. Gresham, sir—you couldn't. You—go out with me—a grand gentleman like you.

GRES. Grand gentleman be hanged! Are you game, Maud Alice?

M. A. Game, sir? Oh—I—I——

GRES. Suppose you imagine that I'm your sweetheart for the day. You would let him take you out if you had one, wouldn't you?

M. A. Yessir, but——

GRES. Then that's settled. I am your sweetheart, am I not?

M. A. (*looking at him, all heart feeling in the look.*) Yes, sir. You are—my—sweetheart.

(*His back is to her as she speaks.*)

GRES. Then run and get your toggery on and let's go. I'm having a day off, too. I'm sending all the blue devils away, Maud Alice; I'll bury them in the Chamber of Horrors. We're just going to have a happy day.

(*Organ off plays tune, "Somewhere."*)

M. A. Yessir. Did ye say that because of the organ, sir?

GRES. The organ?

M. A. Yessir. Listen. Whenever the organ plays that tune I know I'm going to have a happy day. You're sure you really want to go, sir?

GRES. Of course I do. You'll point them all out to me, won't you? Charles Peace and——

M. A. And Mrs. Maybrick, sir—and the woman as kept the baby farm—and I'll wear me new hat, sir. It's got seven feathers—and me green stockings. Oh!—I'm that 'appy I could fair scream.

(*Bell rings off L.*)

GRES. There—there; run and get ready.

M. A. (*pulling off cap and apron kicks them aside on floor.*) Yessir, I'll be back in a jiffy, sir. I mean, I'll not be a minute, sir. I'll come back fer yer slops.

A CHANGE OF COLOR.

SCENE. — *A parlor or sitting-room. (NELLIE and LETTIE are discovered seated, c., in rocking-chairs, and busy with fancy work.)*

LETTIE. It has just occurred to me, Nellie, it is two months to-day since you received that valentine.

NELLIE. Why, so it is. How good you are at remembering dates. (*Aside.*) She little imagines how well *I* remember it.

LETTIE. And do you still think Harold Grey sent it?

NELLIE. Do I *still* think he sent it? As if I *ever* thought so, Lettie.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, come, now, Nellie: there's no use of your playing off on me in that way.

NELLIE (*very gravely*). What do you mean, Lettie? Did I ever *say* he sent it?

LETTIE. Certainly not. Oh, you sly puss! people don't always need to *say* things in order to be understood.

NELLIE. You seem to forget that it was you who suggested Harold Grey, simply because he was the only young gentleman who lived opposite my home.

LETTIE (*laughing*). Oh, you delicious piece of innocence! of course I don't forget, neither do I forget how very easily you were convinced.

NELLIE (*angrily*). Perhaps, though, you forget how much trouble you took to bring about my introduction to the young gentleman?

LETTIE (*leaning forward, and patting NELLIE on the knee*). Come, now, Nellie, don't be vexed with me; I'll not tease you any more. Of course I worked hard to bring about an acquaintance between you, and I am sure he, poor fellow, has worked quite as hard to keep it up.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). You were very kind.

LETTIE (*soothingly*). There, Nellie, don't let us quarrel over Harold Grey. Indeed, if we do, I shall wish we had never either of us heard of him; but, honestly, Nellie, the next best thing to winning the young gentleman's favor myself, was to see him smile on you, as he has been doing for the last two months.

NELLIE (*sarcastically*). Perhaps it is not too late yet, for you to make a conquest of him yourself.

LETTIE (*sweetly*). Now, Nellie, dear, don't make any more of those sharp speeches. I know, and so do you, that he is up to his eyes in love with you; and you know also that I'm not a bit envious of you.

(*Enter R., ELLEN BROWN hastily, and carrying a crumpled sheet of note paper.*)

NELLIE (*throwing her arm about LETTIE*). You are a dear good girl, Lettie, and I—

ELLEN (*advancing C., speaking excitedly*). Shure, Miss

Nellie, wull ye read this? (*Extends paper. Both girls jump from their chairs, dropping fancy work.*)

LETTIE. }
NELLIE. } (*together*). Oh, what is it?

ELLEN (*more quietly*). Oh, ut's nothing fur ye's to be scairt of, young ladies. Shure I jist wants ter axe ye, Miss Nellie, did ye get a valentine last winter beginning loike this,—

“Moi pretty colleen bawn,
Smoiling like the summer dawn.”

NELLIE (*laughing, and dropping into her chair again*). No, indeed, Ellen, I did not; I am sure I am no one's “colleen bawn.” (*ELLEN turns away, throws her apron over her head, and drops into the chair vacated by LETTIE.*)

LETTIE. Was there ever anything so funny? Have you broken the heart of some wild Irishman, Miss Nellie?

ELLEN (*sobbing aloud*). Och, it's desaved I am, entoirely! (*LETTIE and NELLIE go to ELLEN. NELLIE puts her hand on her shoulder.*)

NELLIE. Tell me all about your trouble, Ellen. Perhaps I may be able to help you in some way.

ELLEN (*wipes her eyes, and removes the apron, but sobs frequently as she goes on with her recital*). It's like this, Miss: Jimmie end me's been kinder off since iver St. Valentine's day —

LETTIE (*impatiently*). But, who is Jimmie?

NELLIE. Don't interrupt her, he's —

ELLEN (*pertly to LETTIE*). Shure he's me shpark, Miss, an' a loikely one he is, too. (*Aside.*) An' a loikelier one than she'll ever pick up, I'm a-thinking,

unless she mends her manners, (*To NELLIE.*) Ye see, I jist give him the cowld shoulder, case never a scrip nor a scrap of a valentine came from him. So he niver axed no ixplanashuns of me, but jist kept out o' me woi, which same is quoite loike him. To-day we meets in the parrk, quoite be chance; and I says, kinder shwate loike, Good-morning, Jimmie. Och! but he was by me side that quick. Then he says, bold and suddin loike, "So ye didn't think much o' the valentine I sint ye." Valentine, I says, pretty shtiff, an' ye know ye niver sint me wan. And thin he said he did; so I made him dishcribe it, and shure it wasn't a way bit loike the mane stingy wans I got at all, at all. Thin he says nixt, and I got Misther Grey to write some shwate poitry —

NELLIE. Mr. Grey! not Mr. Harold Grey, so lately moved across the street?

ELLEN. The very same, miss.

LETTIE. But how does young Jimmie know him?

ELLEN. Och! bless ye, Miss, me Jimmie has worrked there iver sinse he was a way laddie. And shure (*looking down bashfully*) 'tis for that Misther Grey happens to be living over there: me Jimmie found the house empty, and he thought 'twould be so handy, you know.

LETTIE. Evidently Mr. Jimmie has a good head for planning.

NELLIE. But about the poetry, Lettie, did you know that Harold Grey writes poetry?

LETTIE. Indeed, it is news to me. Aren't you mistaken about it, Ellen?

ELLEN (*scornfully to LETTIE*). Mistaken? well I guess not; what me Jimmie doesn't know about Mither Harold Grey, you needn't try to foind out. (*To NELLIE.*) But his poitry is in all the papers, with some other name tul it that I disremember now; but me Jimmie could tell you.

NELLIE (*eagerly*). Oh, do find out for me, Ellen!

ELLEN. Shure and I will, Miss, to plaze you; but let me tell the rest of me story. When I said that I niver got no valentine the loikes o' that, Jimmie whipped this bit o' paper out o' his pocket, an' he said them was the same words as Mither Grey wrote in the valentine. And then, he says, Mither Grey directed it all shtraight to Miss Nellie Brown. So, I says, Och, you blunderin' b'y! no one calls me Nellie but your own silly self, so it's shtraight to Miss Nellie the poor valentine wint. So I comes to ye, Miss, and ye says ye niver got no sech words at all, at all; an it's a lyin' desavin' scamp me Jimmie is afther all. (*Buries her face, and sobs.*)

NELLIE (*aside to LETTIE*). All this is very strange. I certainly did not get her valentine. (*To ELLEN.*) Will you let me see the paper, Ellen? (*ELLEN hands it to her, and again buries her face, and continues to sob. A bell rings.*)

NELLIE (*to ELLEN*). Hurry, Ellen, and see who is at the door. (*Exit ELLEN, R., hurriedly, wiping her eyes as she goes.*)

NELLIE (*to LETTIE, who looks over her shoulder, and examines writing.*) This writing is certainly done by

the same hand that penned my valentine. Don't you think so, Lettie?

LETTIE (*taking the paper*). I certainly do, which of course proves conclusively that Harold Grey sent your valentine.

NELLIE. Provided that the devoted Jimmie tells the truth.

LETTIE. Does he look capable of lying?

NELLIE. What a question! I have heard that all men —

LETTIE. Oh, there, spare us any cynicism, my dear! but —

NELLIE. Yes, *but*, and this is a very large *but*, what has become of Ellen's valentine, if Jimmie sent it? It is all —

(*Enter HAROLD, R., hastily. He is followed by ELLEN.*

LETTIE *furtively lays the paper on a table at L. of C., and returns to C.* ELLEN *goes forward, snatches the paper, and is about to retire, R., when she stands transfixed at HAROLD'S words.*)

HAROLD. Good-morning, ladies; excuse me, Miss Nellie, but I would like, with your permission, to talk with Ellen a moment about her valentine. (NELLIE *bows assent.*) I have brought my man Jim with me, and, if you are willing, I would like to have Ellen call him in here. (NELLIE *bows, and exit ELLEN.*) I am very sorry, Miss Nellie, to trouble you with all this; but the circumstances are so very peculiar, that I find myself forced to seek an explanation from Ellen. (ELLEN *enters followed by JIM, reluctantly and bashfully.*) Now,

Ellen, did you receive a valentine containing some verses beginning, —

“O me pretty colleen bawn?”

ELLEN (*joyfully*). ‘Thin me Jimmie didn’t loi to me shure? But I niver got that same valentine at all, at all, an’ I thought ut’s desavin’ me he was. (*Looks sideways at JIMMIE, who smiles at her.*)

HAROLD. Then it’s just as I feared. Oh, what a stupid blunder! (*To NELLIE.*) You see, I had promised to write some rhymes for two valentines: one for Jimmie, to be sent to Ellen, here (*ELLEN and JIM exchange smiles and glances*), and one for an old friend of mine, to be sent to his Dulcinea. The latter was late in getting to its destination, consequently, when my friend left the office, he told the boy that if a letter came bearing the postmark of this town, he must open it, and enclose whatever it contained in the envelope waiting directed on the desk, and then mail the same immediately. The office boy obeyed, and, of course, like any other inquisitive, conscience-lacking boy, read the verses, and took due note of the address.

ELLEN. Och! the mane shcamp!

HAROLD. So, a few days after, it chanced that my friend most unexpectedly obtained an introduction to the lady in whom he felt so keen an interest. Their acquaintance progressed finely, until, thanks to the smallness of the town and the office boy’s indiscretion, the name of the sender of this particular valentine reached the young lady’s ears.

NELLIE. } Oh, how delightful!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. Not so delightful either, for I had mixed the valentines in my haste, and imagine how either of you would fancy being addressed by a total stranger as his

“Pretty colleen bawn,
Smiling like the summer dawn.”

NELLIE. } (*laughing*). How funny! Oh, how funny!
LETTIE. }

HAROLD. My friend did not think it very funny, I assure you. The young lady wrote him a caustic note for presuming to claim her as his “colleen bawn.” Then, I came in for a good round scolding for sending him lines of that character, when I knew the young lady was a stranger to him. I saw at once that I had mixed up the valentines in some way; so now, Ellen, if you will kindly give me the valentine which was intended for the other fair maid, I think I can settle this matter all around, and prove to my friend that I still have at least a grain of sense left.

ELLEN. It’s roight glad I’ll be to help you settle the matter, Misther Grey, if you’ll jist tell me what loike was the other valentinoe, shure.

HAROLD. Well, it was simply a sheet of heavy note paper, and on it some lines beginning, —

“O maiden sweet,
Across the street —”

NELLIE (*starting forward*). Why, that was my —

LETTIE (*laughing*). Well, of *all* the funny mistakes!

HAROLD (*coming to NELLIE, and taking her hand*). You don’t mean to say, Miss Nellie, that *you* received that silly nonsense.

NELLIE (*withdrawing her hand, and speaking coldly*). I certainly did receive a valentine such as you have just described.

ELLEN. Och, Miss Nellie, an' ye got moine afther all, or the one what was mixshed up wid moine. Now, ye see (*to JIM*), that's all case ye sint it to Nellie insted o' Ellin, jist.

NELLIE (*impatiently*). I ought to have known the letter was not for me, for Brown was spelt without an *e*. (*To HAROLD.*) But, I suppose you want your valentine; I'll look it up, and if you'll call to-morrow I'll hand it to you. (*Aside.*) It's in my pocket this very minute, but of course I shall not tell him so.

HAROLD. Oh, that will be all right, Miss Nellie. But, now, Jim, what can I do to straighten this matter between you and your "colleen"?

JIM (*taking ELLEN'S arm*). Faith, sur, an' we'll straighten it ourselves jist, though thanks to ye all the same. (*They walk apart, and converse confidentially in whispers.*)

HAROLD. And now, dear Miss Nellie, I have no apology to make to you, except that the verses which the good St. Valentine brought to you were not worthy the one to whom he carried them. Thanks to St. Valentine, my friend's misfortune is my blessing.

NELLIE (*coldly*). It is all the fault of my horrid common name of Browne. (*HAROLD takes her hand, and bends toward her tenderly.*)

LETTIE (*aside*). It's very evident that I'm out of place in this crowd. Oh, if I had only a tailor's dummy, or even a stick, to make love to just now! I

believe I'll hunt up the poker as a substitute. (*Goes to rear, and, while watching the others, indulges in pantomime until the curtain falls.*)

HAROLD. Since you dislike the name of Browne so much, Miss Nellie, why not change it to "*Grey*," dear Nellie? Don't say you dislike "*Grey*" also.

NELLIE (*archly*). *Grey* always was my favorite color.

JIM (*coming forward with ELLEN*). Shure, Misther *Grey*, we've straightened it, sur. We're to be married in jist wan month from this happy day.

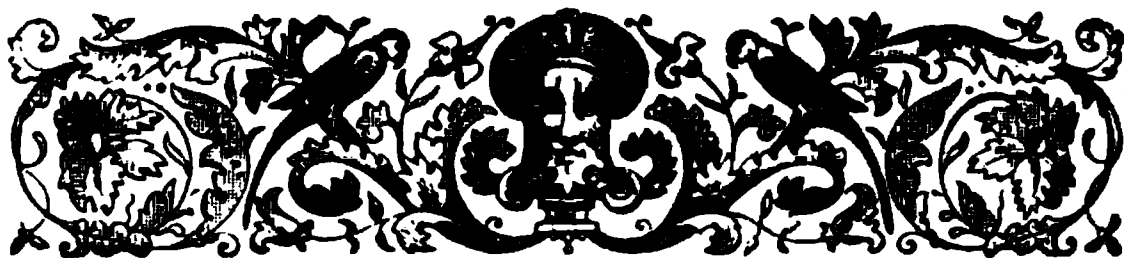
HAROLD (*shaking JIM's hand*). Well done, Jim. Miss Nellie and I have also "*straightened it*:" she has consented to become Mrs. *Grey*. (*Puts his arm about her.*)

NELLIE (*saucily*). How you do take things for granted, sir!

JIM. Och, bedad, and from "*Brown*" to "*Grey*" is a good "*change o' color*!" and may ye's niver rigit that same av ye's live till ye're an hundred and a day.

(HAROLD, NELLIE, R.; JIM, ELLEN, L.; LETTIE *in rear C., laughing.*)

CURTAIN.



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

A Drama in Three Short Acts.

CHARACTERS.

MR. NEAL *A wealthy gentleman of middle age*
LOTTIE *His daughter*
ERNEST MERLE, *A wealthy young gentleman, in love with*
LOTTIE; disguised as MR. SPIERS, a book-agent
TIM *An Irish lad*
AUNT PRUE *An old lady, deaf, and very eccentric*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Neal, handsome business suit.

Mr. Spiers, plainer business suit; a wig of red hair; also heavy whiskers and mustache to match.

Tim, a new cheap "store suit."

Lottie, stylish morning costume.

Aunt Prue, handsome dress for an old lady.



ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor.* MR. SPIERS *is discovered striding angrily about the room ; comes to C.*

MR. SPIERS. That stupid Tim ! I've a good mind to discharge him on the spot. Of course he has to be in my confidence, in a measure, and he has a dozen times nearly spoiled all by his blunders. Ah ! there he comes.

(*Enter TIM, R.*)

TIM (*speaking rapidly*). Sure, Mither Mer—

MR. SPIERS (*angrily*). There, Tim ! *can't* you learn anything ?

TIM (*bowing humbly*). Faith an' I crave yer honor's parding, but shure Mither Mer— Spier — ut's roight. I got it that toime — but ye're the gay laddie buck in that rig. (*Laughs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*frowning*). Well, enough of that, Tim. But now, tell me if you've done your errands properly.

TIM. It's that I have, Mr. Spiers, — listen to that jist — though I came near niver foinding meself in this big Chicagie.

MR. SPIERS. Well, Tim, there is just one thing

about it, you must be more careful about my name. You have come very near spoiling everything several times.

TIM. Indade, thin, and I'll be that keerful, shure an' I'd niver spoil your little lark at all, at all.

MR. SPIERS (*gravely*). Tim, this is no "little lark." It is a very serious business. Perhaps if I tell you all about it, you will be able to keep a closer watch on that blundering tongue of yours. The truth is, Tim, I am in love with a young lady —

TIM (*interrupting*). Bless her purty eyes whoever she is, but she's a lucky colleen.

MR. SPIERS. No; she is most unlucky, for her father hates me, and will not allow us to meet; so, when I was nearly wild to see her, I hit upon this disguise and gained admission to her presence as a book-agent. Then, I learned that they were coming West, so I immediately followed them here.

TIM. Begorra an' is she in this city, sur?

MR. SPIERS. In this city? Tim, she is in this very hotel. I saw her last night and this morning at the table. But this is not all, Tim. I have a friend in this city who knows the young lady's father, Mr. Neal, well. I went to see this friend, without my disguise, of course, and told him my story. The consequence was that he came up to the hotel early last evening when we were all standing around talking, and, pretending to chance upon me unexpectedly, he managed to introduce me to Mr. Neal as Mr. Spiers. I stuck by him all the evening, took him to a concert, met him again this morning before breakfast, and he then said he would introduce

me to his daughter at the first opportunity. Now, do you see, Tim?

TIM. Shure, an' it's a nate schame it is sur, and I'll be as keerful as iver I can, sur.

MR. SPIERS. Well, here (*hands coin*), go out and buy me the morning paper and bring it to me down in the office. (*Exit TIM, R.*) I think if I lounge about there awhile, I am likely to see Mr. Neal and perhaps be *kindly* introduced to my beloved. (*Exit, R.*)

(*Enter LOTTIE, L.; carries a newspaper; comes to C.*)

LOTTIE. How delightful to know that I am at last in Chicago, but I must see what is going on in this great city. (*Sits in chair, and opening the paper is absorbed in it.*)

(*Enter MR. NEAL, L.*)

MR. NEAL (*going to LOTTIE*). Oh, here you are. I was in hopes to find you. I want to bring a young friend of mine up here and introduce him.

LOTTIE (*her eyes on the paper*). But first you must tell me who he is, what is his occupation, and where his residence?

MR. NEAL. His name is Mr. Spiers, and —

LOTTIE (*not looking up*). Oh, there, there, that's enough. Spare me anything further.

MR. NEAL. But you *must* hear the rest. Charlie Lount introduced him to me, so he must be all right. He is a very entertaining young fellow, and when discussing business matters he has a manner that suits me exactly.

LOTTIE (*turning the paper, but not looking up*). And his business?

MR. NEAL. General book-agent.

LOTTIE (*starting up and speaking scornfully*). "Book-agent!" The idea of introducing a book-agent to *me*!

MR. NEAL (*striding angrily up to her*). Now, I'd just like to know what you mean by such pertness, miss?

LOTTIE (*aside*). Dear me, what a fancy he must have taken to Mr. Spiers. (*To him.*) I mean what I say, of course. I don't care to know a book-agent. (*Walks off, R.*)

MR. NEAL (*following her*). See here, young woman, do you forget that your father sprang from the ranks, and won by honest toil the wealth that you so arrogantly enjoy?

LOTTIE (*returns to C.; sits*). How can I forget it when you so often go out of your way to remind me of it? (*Reading paper again.*)

MR. NEAL (*sternly*). Well, understand me, I want no more of this high-mightiness from you. It all comes from your association with that young aristocrat, Ernest Merle. His father snubbed and brow-beat me when I was a youth, and now comes his son filling my daughter's head with high-strung notions. It's too much to bear patiently, and I don't want any more of it. But I do want you to be civil to Mr. Spiers. I'm going to hunt him up now, and just remember if you get off any of your hity-tity ways to him, I promise you, you'll regret it. (*Exit, R.*)

LOTTIE (*throws down paper; rises*). Polite to him, polite to him! Ah, if he only knew how hard it will be to avoid being even more than he asks. But I do

fear I shall laugh in his face, for he looks so comical in that disguise. How dreadful it would be if I should laugh! Father would then think, of course, that I am not treating Mr. Spiers with becoming deference; but I hear them coming, I must control my countenance. (*Sits, takes up paper and reads.*)

(*Enter MR. NEAL and MR. SPIERS, R. The introduction is given and received in due form, LOTTIE and MR. SPIERS performing their parts with becoming gravity.*)

MR. NEAL. And now, Lottie, if you can entertain Mr. Spiers, I shall be very glad, as I have a little business (*looks at watch*) to attend to at this very hour. I will ask your aunt to come down. Good-morning, Spiers, see you at dinner. (*Exit, R.*)

MR. SPIERS (*embracing LOTTIE*). Your aunt? What does he mean? I didn't know you were troubled with so useless an appendage. *Must* she come here to bother us?

LOTTIE. Oh, she'll not bother us much. She's as deaf as a post, and never sits down without falling asleep. (*Both laugh.*)

MR. SPIERS. But who is she?

LOTTIE. My mother's only brother's widow. You must know, at the last moment some one told papa it would be unconventional for me to wander about the country with him unless I had a chaperon, so he sent for Aunt Prue; but here she comes.

(*Enter AUNT PRUE, L.*)

LOTTIE (*goes up to her and shouts in her ear*). Good-morning, Aunt Prue; did you rest well?

AUNT PRUE (*also speaking very loud*). Oh, Mr. Cres-

well! How do you do, Mr. Creswell? Happy to meet you.

(LOTTIE *smothers a laugh behind her handkerchief*. MR. SPIERS *bows gravely*. AUNT PRUE *passes and sits in a large chair behind them while they face the audience and laugh*.)

MR. SPIERS. So, I have another name. I hope you'll not forget who I am.

LOTTIE. I hope I shall remember it better than poor auntie does her chaperonage. See, she is asleep already.

MR. SPIERS (*embraces LOTTIE*). Bless her! She is the finest old lady I ever saw. But now I must tell you, I have ordered a carriage so that we can see something of the city. Your father approved of the plan, but as he said nothing about Aunt Prue, the carriage I have ordered will hold only two.

(*At this point TIM enters, R., unseen by them. He doubles himself up with silent laughter, and makes grimaces at them, as they stand lovingly together. He then goes out, silently, at the conclusion of MR. SPIERS'S next speech.*)

LOTTIE. Oh, she will never miss us, poor soul. Isn't she a delightful chaperon to have?

(AUNT PRUE *snores*.)

MR. SPIERS. The very best I ever saw. I hope she will always be so sleepy. Your father told me this morning that he was going next to Virginia City. Of course I also have business engagements there. (TIM *whistles outside*.)

(They start away from each other. Enter TIM, R., grinning.)

TIM. The carriage is at the dure, Mr. Mer— Spiers, yer honor.

LOTTIE *(to TIM, laughing)*. Look out, my fine fellow.
(To SPIERS.) I will be ready in a moment, Mr. Spiers.
(To TIM.) You see *I* know my lesson.

(Exeunt MR. SPIERS and TIM, R.)

LOTTIE *(throwing a kiss to AUNT PRUE, who, with her head thrown back in her chair and her mouth open, is snoring loudly)*. By, by, auntie; pleasant may thy dreams be. *(Exit, L.)*

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *Hotel parlor at Virginia City. (Costumes for this Act are the same as in Act I.) Enter TIM, R., looking eagerly about.*

TIM. Shure no, and she's not here yit. (*Sighs.*) Bless me buttons, but I wish she'd come. Shure Mither Merle — och, blast me buttons! — Shpiers, jist kapes me a-running in an' out o' this parlor to see if she's come dune the stairs jist, whiles he stands around on one leg looking that lonesome after her, 'twould make your heart ache jist to look at him. Shure, an' it's jolly larks we's had the last two weeks, sich times in owld Chicagie; och, but I wish we were back there ag'in. Well, I'll go and tell him shure his swateheart is nowhere about. (*Going, R.*)

(*Enter LOTTIE, L.*)

LOTTIE (*coming to c.*). O Tim, is that you? Good-morning; have you seen Mr. Spiers this morning, Tim?

TIM (*returning to c.*). Och, miss, have I sane him? Well, if you'll belave me, he's kept me running to look for you ever since the breakfast was over.

LOTTIE. Well, where is he now?

TIM. Out on the veranda, looking as lonesome as a pigeon in a shnow shtorm. Whatever was the matter wid ye this morning?

LOTTIE. I know I am a little late, but I had a dress-

maker to attend to this morning, and — (*Enter SPIERS, R.*) Ah, there he comes. You may go now.

MR. SPIERS (*comes to C. and takes LOTTIE'S hand*). Yes, go now, Tim.

TIM (*aside as he goes*). Och, yis, they're moighty fast to say, "go now, Tim," but, for all their shlyness, it's meself knows well what they'll be up to the minute me back is turned on 'em. (*Exit, R.*)

(MR. SPIERS *and* LOTTIE *embrace*; *he then leads her to a seat beside him on the sofa.*)

MR. SPIERS. It did seem as if you would never get down-stairs this morning. But where are your father and Aunt Prue?

LOTTIE. Oh, Aunt Prue is somewhere about. You know she and I have long ago given up trying to keep track of each other. In fact, she has looked upon me as something quite beyond her management ever since that day I went off with you and left her sleeping in her chair.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, yes, I remember about that. How long did she sleep there, do you suppose?

LOTTIE. Sure enough, I never told you about that. As soon as I returned to the hotel, I ran up to the parlor, and there she was just as I had left her. It was dinner-time, you know, so I was forced to waken her. She saw my street dress, looked at her watch, and took in, of course, how basely I had deserted her. Poor auntie, she has merely pretended to look after me ever since.

MR. SPIERS. Well, you are in no danger of not

being cared for; but you did not tell me where your father is. I have not seen him at all this morning.

LOTTIE. He has joined a party who "do" the mines this morning. They had an early breakfast and went off immediately afterward.

MR. SPIERS. You must not forget I have arranged for a party for that same purpose to-morrow.

LOTTIE. No, I have not forgotten. In fact, papa was quite put out with me because I would not go with him this morning. I did not tell him to-morrow's party was of your arranging.

MR. SPIERS. If you had, he would have excused you willingly, I think.

LOTTIE. Of course he would, but I just felt perverse enough not to tell him. (*Looking at him archly.*) In fact, I shall do nothing to encourage the ridiculous influence you have acquired over him.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Oh, indeed, perhaps you can manage in some way to break it up.

LOTTIE. Something must be done, for, if you'll believe me, he told me last night that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see me Mrs. Spiers.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). And what answer did you make?

LOTTIE. I told him he could hardly expect me to marry Mr. Spiers until he asked me.

MR. SPIERS. And that you know he'll never do.

LOTTIE. See how poor papa is deluded. He declares that Mr. Spiers is ready to throw himself at my feet if I will only be kind and give him the opportunity.

MR. SPIERS (*laughing*). Cruel girl, to be so chary of

opportunities! But what did you say in reply to all this.

LOTTIE (*sighing*). Oh, of course, I went on in the usual strain. I declared that I should never marry any one but Ernest Merle, and that if he still continued to withhold his consent, I should be as obdurate as himself and would remain an old maid forever.

MR. SPIERS. Oh, you dear, brave girl! But, indeed, I hardly see the need of your talking so decisively to him and making him angry.

LOTTIE (*excitedly*). I tell you something's got to be done with him. He's so determined that I shall marry Mr. Spiers. If he keeps on you'll have to go away, or else I disclose the whole thing. Oh, but I was frightened, he was so angry.

MR. SPIERS. Because you declared your intention of marrying only Ernest Merle?

LOTTIE (*tearfully*). Yes: he strode around the room, and vowed I should never marry Ernest Merle while he lived. (*Sobs.*) O Ernest, he flew at me like a wild man, and shouted in my ear, "You ungrateful girl, you shall never marry that young aristocrat until I am under the ground."

(*At these words MR. SPIERS starts up in much excitement and walks away. LOTTIE buries her face in her handkerchief, and sobs aloud.*)

MR. SPIERS (*returning and laying his hand on LOTTIE'S bowed head*). Lottie, stop and tell me calmly if those were his very words.

LOTTIE (*looking up*). Of course they were, but why do you look so? Surely you do not wish him dead? (*Shrinking from him.*)

MR. SPIERS. No, no ; but can't you see the advantage his words give us ?

LOTTIE (*angrily*). How can you talk so ? He shan't die ; he is as strong and as well as I am, and he is by no means an old man. O Ernest, I didn't think you'd be so cruel as to want my only parent to die, even for the sake of getting *me*. (*Sobs.*)

MR. SPIERS (*dropping on his knees beside her*). My darling, you misunderstand me altogether. Isn't he *under the ground* to-day ? And much farther, too, than he is ever likely to be again.

LOTTIE (*starting up and clasping her hands*). Oh, *now* I catch your meaning.

MR. SPIERS (*rising and putting his arm about her*). Well, then, put on your bonnet while I order the carriage. We'll visit the minister, dearest, within half an hour.

LOTTIE. But — but — you know, Ernest, he didn't mean it in that way. Isn't it unfair to take advantage of him in that way ?

MR. SPIERS. Unfair ? Certainly not. Have you forgotten "all is fair in love" ? Now be ready in half an hour. Good-day to the future Mrs. Spiers, otherwise Mrs. Merle. (*Bows low, kisses his hand and exit, R.*)

LOTTIE (*slowly coming to C.*). I see he is determined to have his own way this time. Dear me, what will papa say ? (*Stands in thought.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III.

SCENE. — *The same as in last Act. (Costumes, the same as in last Act, except for LOTTIE, who wears a handsome summer street costume, with light wrap and hat.)*

Enter MR. NEAL, L.

MR. NEAL. Where can Lottie be, I wonder? I have been at home an hour; dinner is over, and still she is not here. That blundering Irish boy, Tim, says she went off this morning with Mr. Spiers. It's strange what keeps them away beyond the dinner hour. However, I may as well make myself easy about her since she's with Spiers. (*Takes up a paper and sits, R. C.*) How I do wish she would take a fancy to him. I don't see how in the world she can help it. He is far superior to that upstart Merle, according to my way of thinking. Of course I didn't allow myself to become very well acquainted with Merle. In fact, I never thought very much about him; just saw him come and go at the house like the other youngsters, until that morning he came and asked me for my daughter. Oh, the impudence of it! He knew I hated his father. Well, at least, I had the satisfaction of giving him a curt refusal. Give him my daughter? Not a bit of it. If she is determined to marry no one but him, she may pass her days in single blessedness. Of course — I am liable — to die. Ha, I see how it will be! as soon as I am under the sod they will marry, even if

they are fifty years old. Merle is just the kind of a fellow to wait all his life for the girl he wants. Well, there is one satisfaction that I can and *will* have; they shall not spend a cent of my hard-earned money. No, sir; I'll make my will, and I'll arrange it so that she'll have to choose between my money and Merle. Of course she'll take Merle, trust her for that, the stubborn chit. I don't suppose they'll miss my money so very much, since Merle has a fair fortune of his own, but I'll have the satisfaction of knowing that no one by the name of Merle can handle a cent of my money. But life is uncertain. Although I am hale and strong, who can tell what may happen? I believe (*rises and lays down the paper*) I'll go at once and hunt up a lawyer. I'll have the will all made and witnessed before the sun goes down. It's a wonder I never thought of the matter before. But it's not too late now, and I'll show that upstart Merle — (*Enter LOTTIE and MR. SPIERS, R.*) Oh, here you are at last! Another moment and I should have missed you, for I was going down town. So you've been off junketing as well as the old gentleman. Well, I hope you've had a gay time. (*Aside.*) I've half a mind to take Spiers with me to witness the will.

MR. SPIERS (*taking LOTTIE'S hand and advancing a step or two*). Mr. Neal, I beg to introduce my wife, Mrs. Merle.

(MR. NEAL *stands a few moments transfixed.*)

MR. NEAL (*breathlessly*). Your wife? Mrs. Merle!

MR. SPIERS. Exactly. I —

MR. NEAL (*striding toward him in a threatening manner*). You don't mean — you don't mean —

MR. SPIERS (*calmly*). Just what I say, Mr. Neal. (*Tears off wig and whiskers.*) This lady (*places LOTTIE'S hand in his arm*) is my wife. She is also Mrs. Merle. (MR. NEAL *stands silent, looking from one to the other.*) I perceive by your face that you begin to comprehend matters. You will say that we have deceived you, but I beg you to believe that I alone am to blame. What else could I do under the circumstances? Think for a moment, I beseech you, of your own "love's young dream." Yesterday you told Lottie that she might marry Ernest Merle when you were "under the ground." We have simply taken you at your word. Were you not *under the ground* to-day? How could you expect us to wait for that other (I hope) far-distant day when you are finally under the ground? Let me say further that you liked me as Mr. Spiers, and were willing that Lottie should marry me. Can you not like me a little in my own character? I assure you, Ernest Merle is quite as good a fellow as "Spiers, the book-agent."

LOTTIE (*coming forward and laying her hand on her father's arm*). O papa, do forgive us! You have long scorned Ernest for his father's sake, try now to like him, if ever so little, for his own.

(MR. NEAL *turns about and walks to C., with his head down. LOTTIE returns and takes her husband's arm. MR. NEAL then faces them.*)

MR. NEAL. When a man is completely beaten, I

suppose the best thing he can do is to submit as gracefully as possible, but I've more than half a mind to call you Mr. and Mrs. Spiers to the end of my days.

LOTTIE (*advancing with MERLE to c.*). Oh, no, papa, spare me that punishment, I beg of you. Think of it, that dreadful name! (*Enter AUNT PRUE, L.*) But here comes Aunt Prue, we must explain the situation to her.

AUNT PRUE (*very loud while coming to c.*). What's going on? Why, Lottie, what have you done with Mr. Creswell? I saw you come home with him, but I don't know this gentlemen at all. (*Looks into MR. MERLE'S face sharply.*)

MR. NEAL (*very loud*). This is Lottie's husband, Mr. Merle.

AUNT PRUE. An English earl! Oh, my sakes! (*Courtesies very low three times.*) Glad to meet you, sir, very glad, I'm sure. I'm descended from an English earl myself. My great-great-grandmother's cousin was an English earl. Maybe you've heard of him. Let — me — see — Oh, I cannot remember his name, now; but — Lottie, you shouldn't hang on to the gentleman's arm that way, even if he is an English earl. Girls didn't do so in my time, I tell you.

LOTTIE. Oh, bother! But, papa, dear (*she goes to MR. NEAL and lays her hand upon his arm; at which AUNT PRUE nods her head vigorously, and, coming to the front, says, in an aside, "that looks better, decidedly better"*), do say that you forgive us.

MR. MERLE (*holding out his hand*). Yes, my dear sir, surely you have not forgotten "all is fair in *love*."

(At this point TIM enters at L., and keeping well in the rear, goes through with a dumb show, expressive of his understanding of, and delight in, the situation. Continues this by-play throughout the remainder of the Act.)

MR. NEAL *(giving a hand to each)*. Well, you are a pair of conspirators, but I am forced to admit "all is fair in love."

LOTTIE. Yes, indeed, papa, "*all* is fair in love, even a Mr. Spiers.

MR. NEAL. Yes, or a Mrs. Spiers.

CURTAIN.



"W. H."

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

MR. MERTIL.

MRS. MERTIL. .

JANE *A servant*

MISS FELTONBOUGH . . . *A "woman suffragist"*

COSTUMES.

Mr. Mertil, ordinary business suit.

Mrs. Mertil, neat home dress.

Jane, calico dress, long white apron.

Miss Feltonbough, plain dark dress, quite short; outside wraps and bonnet very plain, brown veil, a wig of short sandy hair, cotton gloves. This character must be a large (not fleshy) masculine-looking woman.



“W. H.”

SCENE. — *A sitting-room or parlor. Enter, R., MR. MERTIL wearing his overcoat, hat, and gloves ; he carries a written postal card conspicuously in his hand. Comes to C.*

MR. MERTIL. I thought I should find my wife here. Of course she doesn't expect me ; she thinks I am in New York to-day. Well I'll lay her postal here on the table. (*Goes to table at R., front, and lays down the card.*) She will be sure to see it there. H'm, that's a bold-looking handwriting for a lady, I hadn't observed it before ; some advertisement-probably. I wonder who her correspondent can be. (*Takes up the card and turns it over, reads.*) “City, Tuesday, A.M. Dearest F—.” Well, I didn't know she had any friends intimate enough to address her as “dearest Fannie,” that must be what the “F.” is intended for. Let me see what the signature is. (*Reads.*) “G. F.” Ah ! (*starts and looks suspicious*), surely that cannot be *our* friend George Foster ? And he was once a sweetheart of hers too. But let me see what he says. (*Reads.*) “I couldn't get the ‘W. H.’ to-day, but I'll be there to-morrow at three o'clock, sharp. Be ready. Yours as ever, G. F.” (*Striding about excitedly.*) This was written yesterday, so he'll

be here this afternoon. (*Looks at card again.*) And the "W. H." what can that be? Ah, I have it, I have it. (*Excitedly.*) Foster has just bought a new horse that he always speaks of as the "*White Horse*," of course that is what is meant by the "W. H." And this afternoon; oh, well, I'll be here to spoil that pretty game. You'll not ride after the "white horse" this afternoon, my pretty lady. But, first, I'll go put this postal card back under the door where I found it. She must never know that I have seen it. (*Exit, R.*)

(*Enter MRS. MERTIL, L., comes to C.*)

MRS. MERTIL (*sighs*). Dear me, I am so lonesome this afternoon. (*Goes to chair near table and sits.*) But it must be nearly time for the postman, and perhaps I shall get a nice letter to charm away my melancholy mood. (*Takes up paper.*)

(*Enter MR. MERTIL, R., sees his wife.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Ha! my wife is here, I must control myself. (*To her.*) Well, Fannie, here I am quite unexpectedly.

MRS. M. (*starting up and running to him*). O Harry, what a pleasure! How glad I am to see you! (*They embrace.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). What an excellent actress she is, indeed! but of course she hasn't seen the postal yet.

MRS. M. (*taking off his hat and gloves*). But how *did* you happen to get home? (*Carries the hat and gloves to table while MR. M. removes his outer coat and hangs it on a tripod or other convenience in a corner.*)

MR. M. Well, you see my business all moved off with unusual smoothness. (*Both return to C.*)

MRS. M. (*putting her hand on his arm*). And I was just hoping the postman would bring me a letter from you. By the way, it must be time for him.

MR. M. Yes, he was just crossing the street as I came up the steps (*aside*), which is quite true.

MRS. M. Oh, then, I'll run into the hall and see if I have any mail. (*Exit R.*)

MR. M. Evidently her husband is not her only correspondent. Well (*walking about moodily*), how often have I said jokingly that a man who comes home unexpectedly takes his fate in his own hands. Little did I imagine I would ever realize the truth of my idle words. (*Sighs.*)

(*Enter JANE, L.*)

JANE. Oh, Mr. Mertil, you frightened me. I didn't know you were at home. I am looking for Mrs. Mertil.

MR. M. She went into the hall a moment ago.

JANE (*turning to go*). Oh, well, I can wait.

MR. M. Don't be in a hurry, Jane, I want to speak to you. (*Aside.*) How shall I approach her? (*To her.*) You are a very good girl, Jane (*takes a roll of bills from his pocket*), and I would like very much indeed to make you a little present.

JANE (*interrupting sharply*). I don't want any of your little presents, so please keep them to yourself, sir.

MR. M. (*aside*). H'm, spirited. Well, it will not do to stop now. (*To her.*) Jane, don't be offended when no offence was intended. I simply want to ask a favor of you, and, as you have always been so good a girl

and have done many little kindnesses for Mrs. Mertil, I think you really deserve a little extra pay now and then, that is all.

JANE. I am willing to do you the favor if I can, but I don't want any pay for it : so make it known quick, for I am in a great hurry with my work.

MR. M. Well, then, tell me this. Who are the most frequent visitors here when I am away ?

JANE. That's easy enough to tell. Mrs. Jones, I think, comes the most often of any one, then Mrs. Binns comes quite often too, and there's —

MR. M. But, among *my* friends, whom do you remember seeing ?

JANE (*surprised*). Your friends ? Why, indeed, sir, I don't remember as any of *your* friends come to see Mrs. Mertil. Why should they ?

MR. M. (*embarrassed*). Oh, they might come to — er — to — er — call, you know. There's Mr. Foster, now, you know him, don't you ?

JANE. Oh, yes, sir, I know him : but I've never seen him here except of an evening with his wife, and when you were at home, sir, too.

MR. M. Oh, well, that is all, Jane. You are sure you have named all of my wife's intimate friends ?

JANE (*reflecting*). Well, yes, I think so, sir. Oh, there's Miss Feltonbough. She's here pretty often.

MR. M. Feltonbough ! Why, that is some one I never heard of before ; she must be a very new acquaintance. Who is she, and what is she like ?

JANE (*laughing*). Well, sir, she's funny enough. I've never seen her face, for she always wears a heavy veil :

but she has a funny form and funny ways. She seems just like a man with a woman's toggery on.

MR. M. (*aside*). Ah! can it be the girl has blundered into the truth? I begin to fear it, for Foster is a small man, and in woman's clothes would look very like an overgrown female. (*To JANE.*) But you may go now, Jane, and if you will please not to tell any one of the questions I have asked you, I will be very grateful to you.

JANE. All right, sir, I will remember. (*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter MRS. M., R., wearing a white apron.*)

MR. M. Well, my dear, you have been a good while. Have you been giving chase to the mail-carrier?

MRS. M. (*laughing*). Oh, no. I went up-stairs to put on a fresh collar and this apron. Isn't it pretty? It is one that I have just finished.

MR. M. Very pretty, indeed. But my dear, could you have Jane make me a cup of tea? I have eaten nothing since breakfast except a light lunch taken on the train.

MRS. M. I will make it for you myself; come into the dining-room with me, and I will refresh you, you poor, hungry man. (*Takes his arm affectionately.*) How stupid of me not to think sooner that you might possibly be hungry. (*Exit, L.*)

(*Enter JANE, R., carrying an illustrated paper.*)

JANE. So she isn't here, either. Well, if I can't find her I am not to blame. I've been all over the house, so I'll jist sit down here and read a while. (*Sits.*) I'm glad enough to get a minute's time to read, for I'm right in the midst of this chapter where that

dreadful old stepfather carries off the beautiful Ada. But, what on earth can have got into Mr. Mertil to ask me so many questions about his wife's callers? I've lived here more than a year, and I never knew him to do such a thing before. He seemed to think there was something queer about Miss Feltonbough, and that's just what I have thought this long time. Why does she always keep her veil down, and why does Mrs. Mertil take her up to her own room instead of taking her to the parlor or sitting-room as she does with her other callers? There's something queer about it, and the queerest thing of all is, that Mr. Mertil is so suspicious. (*Sits lost in thought a moment, then starts up suddenly, dropping paper.*) Oh, oh, I just thought of it! I do believe she is a man dressed up in woman's clothes; wouldn't that be awful? What an exciting time there would be. Better than any story. (*Bell rings.*) There, maybe she is here now. Well, I'll just watch out a little. (*Runs out, R.*)

(*Enter MRS. MERTIL, L.*)

MRS. M. I suppose Jane has gone to the door. Dear me, what if it should be she? (*Takes postal card from pocket.*) Yes, she says at three o'clock (*looks at watch*), and it now lacks only a few minutes of that hour. I hope Jane will have sense enough to take her up-stairs as usual. Harry will not go up there, now, I think, for he said he was in a hurry to go down town as soon as he is done eating.

(*Enter JANE, R.*)

JANE. Mrs. Mertil, the man has come to mend the window-sash in your room. Shall I send him up?

MRS. M. (*nervously*). Why, yes, Jane, of course ; but, dear me, the room will be cold with the window out (*exit* JANE, R.), and, of course, I shall have to entertain *her* in here. Dear me, I wish poor Harry would hurry away. But I must go back and see if he has finished his lunch. (*Exit*, L.)

(*Enter* JANE, R., *laughing*.)

JANE. Oh dear, oh dear, how funny to have that man come now of all times when we've been waiting for him for a whole week. I just know by the way Mrs. Mertil acts that she expects Miss Feltonbough. Well, I don't wonder she's nervous with her bedroom window out and that man up-stairs too. Oh, how I hope Mr. Mertil will not go away, until after she comes. Why, it's grand, just like a story.

(*Enter* MRS. MERTIL, L.)

MRS. M. Did you take the man up-stairs, Jane ?

JANE. Yes'm.

MRS. M. Well, I must go up and look after him a little. (*Exit hastily*, R.)

(*Enter* MR. M., L.)

MR. M. Oh, Jane, you are the very one that I most want to see. Where do Mrs. Mertil and Miss Feltonbough sit when she is here ?

JANE. Always up-stairs, sir ; but if she should happen to come to-day they'll have to sit in here, because, you see, the man is mending the window up-stairs, and the room is cold. Mrs. Mertil would never take her into the parlor, because other callers are liable to come in, and Miss Feltonbough is so funny looking, you know.

MR. M. Oh, yes, I see ; well, I have good reason to

think Miss Feltonbough is coming to-day. So I'll just go over to the drug store and watch for her appearance. When I see her I'll come back and be introduced to her. But you needn't mention the matter to Mrs. Mertil, for I want it to be a surprise to her. Now remember! (*Exit, R.*)

JANE (*clapping her hands and dancing about*). Oh, yes, I'll remember. Dear me, how interesting and exciting it is all getting. Oh, I do hope Miss Feltonbough is a man. Talk about stories!

(*Enter MRS. M., R.*)

MRS. M. Jane, where is Mr. Mertil?

JANE. He came through here and I heard the front door shut soon after.

MRS. M. (*goes to L.*). He must be gone then. (*Aside.*) Gone without a single word of good-by to me. What in the world can have come over him? Surely, I cannot have offended him in any way. Well, he is safely out of Miss Feltonbough's way: there is some consolation in that, at least. She will certainly be here soon. (*Bell rings; to JANE.*) Go to the door, Jane, and if that is Miss Feltonbough bring her in here. (*Exit JANE, R.*) Dear me, I have had a narrow escape, indeed. She and Harry might easily have met on the doorstep. Well, I don't believe I'll take any more such risks, not even for the sake of — (*Enter MISS FELTONBOUGH, R.; she carries a large book.*) And so you have come. (*They shake hands. MISS F. sits in a chair which MRS. M. places at C., with back towards R. entrance; she gives the book to MRS. M. and then removes her bonnet and veil, which MRS. M. lays on the table.*)

And so this wonderful book is in my hands at last !
(*Opens and reads from title page.*) "The Woman's
Hierarchy, by Miss Georgiana Feltonbough." How
lovely that I should at last know a real live authoress.
Oh, what fun it must be to be able to write books.
(*Turns leaves of book and keeps her eyes on it.*)

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*in a hard, nasal tone*). Fun !
Much you know about it ! If you could only imagine
the days and nights of thought and toil represented by
that book.

(MR. M. *enters, cautiously, R.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Yes, yes, that is he ; I know that
shock of sandy hair too well to make a mistake.

MISS FELTONBOUGH. But of course that you can
never understand. To your sheltered and easy life, no
suspicion — (MR. MERTIL *dashes forward, grasps* MISS
FELTONBOUGH *from behind and presses her face close*
against his vest. MRS. M. *screams and drops book.*
MISS F. *struggles to her feet, still held by* MR. M. *with*
his left arm ; with his right hand he pounds her on the
back. Enter JANE, L. *Whole situation as ludicrous as*
possible.)

JANE (*clapping her hands*). Give it to him, give it
to him, Mr. Mertil : I knew it all along, I did, I did.

MRS. M. (*shocked*). Give it to *him* ! Why, Jane,
what on earth can you mean ? (*Goes to her husband*
and throws herself on his right arm.) O Harry,
Harry ! do stop, you will kill the poor woman.

MR. MERTIL (*loosens his hold on* MISS F., *who*
straightens herself and confronts him). Oh, oh ! why it
isn't — (*Turns away and drops his head.*)

MRS. M. (*following him and putting her hand on his arm*). Isn't what? O Harry, *do* explain yourself. I knew you were opposed to "Woman Suffrage," but I did not suppose you would ever carry your dislike so far as this. (*Sobs.*) O Harry, I know I did wrong to deceive you, but I wanted so much to join the society, and Miss Feltonbough is so good when you come to know her. (*Sobs.*)

MR. M. (*aside, as he goes to L. c.*). Oh, I see it all now. I have made a most egregious fool of myself, beside incurring the wrath of that stormy female.

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*putting on her hat, etc.*). Now, Mrs. Mertil, I think I have seen quite enough of the government of your home. I'll trouble you to pick up my "Woman's Hierarchy" and hand it to me. (*MRS. M. complies, and goes toward Miss F., wiping her eyes.*)

MR. M. (*aside*). Fool, fool, that I have been. "W. H." was only a book after all, and I was so sure it meant "*White Horse*." Why will people use abbreviations when writing on postal cards?

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*tucking the book under her arm*). And now, Mr. Mertil, you may rest assured I am not done with you yet. I shall send an officer here before I sleep, to arrest you for assault and battery.

MR. MERTIL (*coming to Miss F.*). What can I say to you? I am aware that no amount of apology can excuse my conduct in your eyes. I can only say that in making this most unprovoked assault upon you I was laboring under the most foolish mistake that I ever made in my life.

MISS FELTONBOUGH (*coldly*). I don't know how foolish it was, but you'll find out to your sorrow that it was the most *serious* mistake you ever made in your life.

MR. M. Well, now, Miss F., let's come to some settlement. Of course the law will give you damages, but we may as well cheat the lawyers and courts out of their fees and settle the thing for ourselves. (*Takes checkbook from his pocket.*) Jane, go and get the pen and ink. - (*Exit JANE, L.*) Now, Miss Feltonbough, just say how much you will take to drop the matter?

MISS FELTONBOUGH. I am not to be bought, sir. Indeed, no amount can pay me for the indignity that I have suffered at your hands.

(*Enter JANE with pen and ink. MR. M. sits at table and prepares to write.*)

MR. M. That is true, but the courts would give you damages which I am sure you would not refuse, and of course you can always use money for "the cause." Come, now, I am sure you can use two hundred dollars to good advantage. (*Writes rapidly.*)

MISS F. (*smiling*). Yes, indeed, Mr. Mertil, I can do a great deal with so generous a sum.

MR. M. (*aside*). Buy herself some decent toggery, I hope, poor thing. (*To her.*) There, Miss Feltonbough, there is my check, and my humble apologies with it. (*Rises and hands check.*)

MISS F. (*taking it*). And don't you want my receipt exonerating you from all claims from me?

MR. M. Not at all. I know you are an honorable woman and will never refer to the matter again.

PHIL. (*outside*). It's waiting. (*Enters, reaches for her bag.*) I wish you would let me see you off.

JUDY (*with a rush gets the bag first*). It isn't heavy. (*Passes him.*)

PHIL. (*gaily*). But it will take two or three of Billy's friends to manage it.

JUDY. No, indeed, one is always enough. (*They go out talking.*) Coming to the cab? No, let's say good-bye here. (*A silence.*) Good-bye, good-bye.

PHIL. (*outside, cheerily*). Good-bye, good-bye! (*Enters.*) Where's the double-dash mischief maker? (*Kicks the same poor rug.*) Where's the meddling old hag? (*Grabs book.*) You sugar-coated hypocrite! You blooming excrescence on sentimental tommy-rot! You—you—— (*Tears out leaf after leaf, failing to see the torn place.*) "Other men's devotion!" Billy's friends, eh? If she hadn't been so everlastingly chipper about getting off alone I'd follow her. (*Flings himself into easy chair.*) She's reached the depot. (*Looks at his watch.*) She's taking the train now. (*Deep dejection.*) It is kind of rough on a fellow when his wife can't stand him a whole year without wandering in the wilds of these weedy friendship mazes. (*Grins.*) But I stirred her up a bit about Isabel. (*Looks at watch.*) She's off!

Enter JUDY, dejected, eyes cast down; does not see PHIL. until after she flings down her bag.

PHIL.	{	(<i>together, joyously</i>).	Judy! (<i>Confused.</i>) Oh, why—
JUDY			I haven't gone yet.
			Phil! (<i>Confused.</i>) You—I
			didn't catch my train.

PHIL. (*jumping up, tries to keep her from seeing torn pages*). Won't you sit down?

JUDY (*very formally*). Thank you, as long as I'm here. (*Sits in straight chair.*) It's very warm.

PHIL. (*politely*). It is warm.

JUDY. The next train doesn't leave until after yours, so (*cordially*) I shall have the pleasure of seeing you off.

PHIL. (*firmly*). I shall not leave until you are gone. You may depend on that.

JUDY (*gently, as her eyes fall on the pages*). You always do have your way when you really want it. (*She steps quickly to his suit-case.*) By the way, what train do you take?



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

A farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

BELLA	<i>The young lady hostess</i>
LOU	}	<i>Young ladies, residents of the same town and acquainted with each other. They are also Bella's guests.</i>
ELLA		
MARY		
EMILY		
GRACE		
JULIA		
FANNIE		

COSTUMES.

Any tasteful dresses that may be suitably worn at a small evening party. Hats and wraps are worn on entering. The latter should of course correspond with the season, and are to be laid aside at the proper time.



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

SCENE. — *A parlor. Eight chairs must be placed carelessly about so that the occupants will be within easy speaking distance of one another and yet not too far from C. Curtain rises. BELLA enters L, and sits.*

BELLA. To think that at last, at long, long last, this village really possesses a full-grown, live, rational, young man! I can hardly realize it. To be sure, we have had Tom Jones, and Harry Spar, and John Smith, the first and second not yet out of their teens, the last a forlorn widower of forty. But now, O joy! here is an eligible young man of not more than twenty-three or four. Tall, handsome, dark-eyed, a lawyer, and with — Oh, *such* a moustache! Dear me! I can hardly wait until I see him entering the room. (*A door-bell rings behind the scenes. BELLA starts up.*) Oh, I do hope that is he! What a charming *tête-à-tête* we may have before the other girls get here! (*Enter LOU, R. BELLA rushes to meet her. They embrace.*)

BELLA (*motioning L.*). Just step in here, Lou, and remove your wraps, and arrange your hair. (*Exit LOU, L.*) I might have known that Lou would be the

first one on hand. Of course that is her privilege, as she is my most intimate friend. (*Re-enter LOU, L. They both sit near C. as LOU speaks.*)

LOU. So, I am the first arrival. I did not expect to be. I thought the girls would all arrive early. O Bella! if you only knew the stir those invitations "to meet Mr. Thompson" have created in this stupid little burgh.

BELLA. Nonsense, Lou! why should it?

LOU. Why should it? Oh, now, Bella, don't pretend not to know that Mr. Thompson is the most delightful, most irresistible, most rare creature ever seen in this huddle called by courtesy a "town."

BELLA. So you have seen him? (*The bell rings. They both spring up, rush to centre, and exclaim together, excitedly, "There he is!" Enter ELLA, R. They rush forward, embrace her, and she is directed by BELLA into the adjoining room, as was LOU. Exit ELLA, L. BELLA and LOU resume seats.*)

LOU. Of course *Ella* would be here on time. I don't suppose cables and chains could have kept her at home to-night.

BELLA. Well, all of my invitations have been accepted. I don't suppose any of the girls would miss coming.

LOU. Unless it may be those whom you forgot to invite.

(*ELLA enters in time to hear the last word.*)

ELLA (*sits near the others*). And how many have you invited, Bella?

BELLA. Only nine.

ELLA }
and } Nine!
LOU. }

LOU. Poor Mr. Thompson!

ELLA. He will not live to tell the tale.

BELLA. I begin to think he foresees the danger, and that his instincts of self-preservation are too strong to admit of his coming.

(The bell rings again. They all start to their feet, and exclaim, "There he is!" as before. Enter MARY. Repeat as on ELLA'S entrance. BELLA directs as before. Exit MARY, L. The others resume seats.)

ELLA. Of course *Mary* would come, trust her for that. Indeed, Bella, it is very generous of you to give all of us girls the pleasure of Mr. Thompson's acquaintance. *(Enter MARY.)* Almost any other girl would have kept his society for herself.

MARY *(approaches the others, and sits)*. But, we must have met him sometime, and, of course, she prefers to have the performance take place under her supervision, as it were.

LOU. Then, I think she will be disappointed, for *I* don't believe he's coming.

(The bell rings. All start up as before, repeat exclamation, etc. Enter EMILY, R. Repeat all "business" as on entrance of others. Exit EMILY, L. Others resume their places.)

MARY. Oh, I knew *she* would be here! It's so long since she's seen a young man, she *(enter EMILY, L.)* forgets how one looks.

EMILY *(coming forward)*. What is that? Who forgets how what looks? *(Sits near others.)*

BELLA. We all have forgotten how a full-grown, live young man looks.

EMILY. Well, where is your curiosity? Why don't you bring him out?

LOU. We await his royal pleasure.

(Bell as before. Repeat former business fully. Enter GRACE, R. Repeat as for others. Exit GRACE, L. The others resume their seats.)

EMILY. Oh, I knew *Grace* would come. She has been on what the boys call a "still hunt" for a *(enter GRACE, L.)* young man for nobody knows how long.

GRACE *(as she comes to the others, and sits)*. Who has been a young man for nobody knows how long? Surely, not Mr. Thompson?

BELLA. Oh, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

LOU. Oh, dear, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

ELLA. No indeed! not *Mr. Thompson*.

MARY. Oh, my, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

EMILY. Why, certainly not *Mr. Thompson*. *(These answers must be very emphatic.)*

BELLA. I conclude you have not seen him, Grace?

GRACE. Seen him? Indeed, I haven't. I have *heard* of nothing else for the last two weeks but Mr. Thompson. Is he handsome?

ALL IN CONCERT. Handsome! handsome! Oh, oh, oh!—oh, oh, oh!

GRACE. Dear me, what a wonder he must be! But why doesn't he come? *(Bell, as before. Repeat former "business." Enter JULIA, R., as before. Exit JULIA, L. The others resume seats.)*

HANS (*scared*). Yah; dat iss if you don't mind, I'll took it back if —

MAR. No, give it to me; I'm just dying for a cheese sandwich.

HANS (*pulling sandwich from pocket*). Quick! I vill safe your life! I vonder do I get a Carnegie Heroics Medal for dat yet.

MAR. (*crossing, R.*). Oh, you're the dearest man!

HANS. Don't be too glad aboud it alreatty. You'll be seeing things like I am when you hafe eaten it, maybe.

MAR. Oh, that'll be all right, Dutchie. (*Eats sandwich.*)

(*Hans approaches box where MARGUERITE stood, then walks away carelessly and whirls quickly to see if statue is still there or on bench. Business of investigating is continued while MARGUERITE eats and is ended by HANS jumping over box.*)

MAR. You've got them pretty bad, haven't you? Where does it hurt you the most?

HANS. Nefer mind aboud dat, tell me vat you vas; vat iss your name?

MAR. Before the footlights I am known as Marguerite Duffee (*accent last syllable*), but down home I am called Madge Duffey. (*Accent first syllable.*)

HANS. Where bouds do you came from?

MAR. Oh, I used to be in a comic opera company. I was a maiden in the Indian chorus until I ran away.

HANS. Naughty girlie to ran away; vhy did you do it?

MAR. I fell in love with a bald-headed old tobacco dealer who sat in the front row, and we were married.

HANS. Oh, vat a shame it iss!

MAR. That is, I thought we were married until I discovered he already had a wife and seven children, all in good heath.

HANS. So dat made it unhealthy for you, eh vat?

MAR. Well, I started in to make it unhealthy for his bank account, but when his wife found out he was in love with me, she put some cli-odiform di-odiform in my coffee and that turned me into a wooden statue.

ALL (*in concert and laughing*). Oh, yes, Mr. Thompson! Oh, yes, we'll all have Mr. Thompson!

FANNIE (*indignantly*). Why, girls, I am surprised at you all. But please don't include my name. The idea of angling for a young man in that way!

BELLA. O Fannie! don't scold us! the girls were only trying to decide whom he should escort home, and they settled on you and Julia.

FANNIE (*looking around*). But where is the young man?

ALL. Oh, he isn't here yet!

FANNIE. So, while you are waiting, you are settling the question of his attentions. You might cast lots on the matter. (*Sarcastically.*)

EMILY. I'll tell you a good plan, girls.

ALL. What is it? What is it?

EMILY. Let him choose for himself.

ALL. Oh! oh!

BELLA. Well, now, girls, since you have settled the question, I will tell you he probably will escort none of you home to-night, for I have invited his two sisters to accompany him. I knew you would be dying to meet them.

(*Bell rings. All exclaim, as before. A voice at right entrance calls loudly, "Miss Bella, here is a note for you!"*)

BELLA. You hear that, girls; pray excuse me a moment. (*Exit BELLA, R.*)

(*The others now huddle together at C., muttering to each other, "Mean thing!" "She did it on purpose!" "Much we care for his old sisters!" "She didn't want*

*him to go home with any of us !” “ We’ll pay her up !”
“ I’ll invite him to my house !”. “ And so will I !” The
last exclamation in chorus. Enter BELLA, R., carrying
an open letter. They all drop quickly into their chairs,
and are silent.)*

BELLA (*coming to c.*). Young ladies, I have just received this note, which I will read. (*Reads.*)

“MISS BELLA,— We are forced, at the last minute, by circumstances beyond our control, to decline your very courteous invitation. I will call on you to-morrow, and explain more fully.

Yours with many regrets,

HARRY THOMPSON.”

(All rise, and come to c.)

LOU. So this is the way we “meet Mr. Thompson !”

ELLA. How charmed I have been to “meet Mr. Thompson !”

MARY. What a rare treat “to meet Mr. Thompson !”

EMILY. Oh, lovely Mr. Thompson !

GRACE. Delightful Mr. Thompson !

JULIA. Oh, rare Mr. Thompson !

FANNIE. Very rare, indeed !

ALL (*except BELLA*). The next time I go out “to meet Mr. Thompson ” —

BELLA (*smiling and courtesying*). Let us hope you will “meet Mr. Thompson.”

CURTAIN.

(Real names may be substituted, if preferred, throughout.)

THE BLUE-GLASS CURE.

BY G. B. BARTLETT.

DR. VIOLET, *dressing-gown, blue spectacles.*

THE CRIPPLE, *very ragged suit, crutches.*

JULIETTA CROOKNECK, *walking dress, hat, arm in sling.*

MR. D. F. POST, *overcoat, stylish hat, huge ear-trumpet.*

JOSEPH CRUIKSHANKS, *dress coat, light pantaloons.*

MR. PILGRIM, *short cloak, under which is a large pillow.*

MRS. ST. VITUS, *old cloak and wig, concealing a rich silk dress.*

Any room, with table covered with books, stuffed chairs, one sheet blue glass. DR. VIOLET is seated at the table waiting for patients. A ring is heard, and he suddenly pretends to be very busy. The cripple hobbles slowly in, and is received with disdain by the doctor, who says:

Well, sir, what do you want?

Cripple. O, doctor, I am very badly off — a cripple for forty years. I have tried everything, but, alas, have found no relief.

Dr. Have you ever tried blue glass?

Cripple. No, but I have tried the contents of many.

TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

SCENE. — *A parlor. Eight chairs must be placed carelessly about so that the occupants will be within easy speaking distance of one another and yet not too far from C. Curtain rises. BELLA enters L, and sits.*

BELLA. To think that at last, at long, long last, this village really possesses a full-grown, live, rational, young man! I can hardly realize it. To be sure, we have had Tom Jones, and Harry Spar, and John Smith, the first and second not yet out of their teens, the last a forlorn widower of forty. But now, O joy! here is an eligible young man of not more than twenty-three or four. Tall, handsome, dark-eyed, a lawyer, and with — Oh, *such* a moustache! Dear me! I can hardly wait until I see him entering the room. (*A door-bell rings behind the scenes. BELLA starts up.*) Oh, I do hope that is he! What a charming *tête-à-tête* we may have before the other girls get here! (*Enter LOU, R. BELLA rushes to meet her. They embrace.*)

BELLA (*motioning L.*). Just step in here, Lou, and remove your wraps, and arrange your hair. (*Exit LOU, L.*) I might have known that Lou would be the

first one on hand. Of course that is her privilege, as she is my most intimate friend. (*Re-enter LOU, L. They both sit near C. as LOU speaks.*)

LOU. So, I am the first arrival. I did not expect to be. I thought the girls would all arrive early. O Bella! if you only knew the stir those invitations "to meet Mr. Thompson" have created in this stupid little burgh.

BELLA. Nonsense, Lou! why should it?

LOU. Why should it? Oh, now, Bella, don't pretend not to know that Mr. Thompson is the most delightful, most irresistible, most rare creature ever seen in this huddle called by courtesy a "town."

BELLA. So you have seen him? (*The bell rings. They both spring up, rush to centre, and exclaim together, excitedly, "There he is!" Enter ELLA, R. They rush forward, embrace her, and she is directed by BELLA into the adjoining room, as was LOU. Exit ELLA, L. BELLA and LOU resume seats.*)

LOU. Of course *Ella* would be here on time. I don't suppose cables and chains could have kept her at home to-night.

BELLA. Well, all of my invitations have been accepted. I don't suppose any of the girls would miss coming.

LOU. Unless it may be those whom you forgot to invite.

(*ELLA enters in time to hear the last word.*)

ELLA (*sits near the others*). And how many have you invited, Bella?

BELLA. Only nine.

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ALL (*in concert and laughing*). Oh, yes, Mr. Thompson! Oh, yes, we'll all have Mr. Thompson!

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(*The others now huddle together at C., muttering to each other, "Mean thing!" "She did it on purpose!" "Much we care for his old sisters!" "She didn't want*

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IRIS Drama in Five Acts. Seven males, seven females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

LADY BOUNTIFUL Play in Four Acts. Eight males, seven females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, four interiors, not easy. Plays a full evening.

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The Vaudeville Stage

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DEAD RECKONING, 2 males, 1 female.

THE INSURANCE AGENT, 1 male, 1 or 2 females.

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MOR'D ALICE, 1 male, 2 females.

MR. MCARDLE'S GUEST, 3 males, 1 female.

THE REAL THING, 2 males.

THE SEPARATION OF THE BROWNS, 1 male, 2 females.

SMOKE UP, 1 male, 1 female.

DEAD RECKONING

A Farce

BY

HENRY DINGLEY COOLIDGE

CHARACTERS.

*As originally produced at Bradford, Vt., Oct. 15th, 1891, for the benefit
of the Public Library*

REUBEN YEASTCAKE, a Baker	MR. F. E. HILAND
ELI GETTHERE, his Clerk	MR. E. E. MUNN
CUPID, a no-good Nigger	MR. WM. DAVENPORT
MRS. YEASTCAKE	MISS JOSIE ROWELL
DOROTHY, her Daughter	MISS MARION MUNN

Costumes eccentric.

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DEAD RECKONING.

SCENE. — *A lawyer's office, plainly furnished. At R. C. there is a large table littered with documents and writing-material; behind the table, facing the audience, is a chair, and another chair is placed at L. C. A bookcase, containing a number of legal works, stands against the wall on the R. near the table. A row of shelves, on which are document-boxes, a few prints of legal luminaries in old-fashioned frames, and an additional chair or two, complete the furnishings of the room, which appears to be somewhat untidily kept. At the back is a door communicating with the corridor.*

MR. RADDLE, *an elderly, sour-faced dyspeptic, is discovered seated at the table munching a crust of bread, and drinking water from a tumbler. A package of legal papers lies before him.*

RADDLE (*examining papers*). Estate of Chatterton Bryce; ditto of ditto; the same of the same. All in proper enough form, and the property ready to be turned over to that butter-mouthed cousin of his. It makes me laugh. (*Chuckles.*) No, hang it! what business has a man with the imp of dyspepsia turning double-back somersaults in the pit of his miserable stomach — what right has such a man to laugh at *anything* I'd like to know? It's getting on too good terms with fickle Fate. Here am I, Ignatius Raddle, painfully lunching on stale bread and water, while other and less deserving men are gorging themselves with terrapin and Welsh rarebit. Oh, dear, there it goes again! Bread isn't old enough by five days! If that numskull Chatterton Bryce *had* had sense enough to remain on earth and pocket his uncle's dollars, ten to one he'd have ruined his digestion with high-living. But what fun he might have had — what fun he might have had while his epigastrium remained right side up! (*Adding up column of figures on one of the papers.*) Six and four are ten, and two are twelve, and nine are — (*Continues adding in an undertone.*)

(*Enter BRYCE.*)

BRYCE. Yes; it's Raddle, sure enough. (*Places his top-coat and hat on chair up stage.*) The same old bald head, only a little more in evidence; the same old crust of bread. (*Coming down.*) Good-morning, Mr. Raddle, I have called —

RAD. (*loudly*). *And seven are forty-nine, and five are—*
(*Continues to add.*)

BR. (C.) The same bad manners too. (*Taking off his gloves.*)
Ten additional years of indigestion have not improved *them*, evidently. (*Whistles softly to himself as he looks about.*)

RAD. (*sharply*). Don't do that!—and eight are sixty-four, and three are — (*Continues as before.*)

BR. (*seating himself on end of table, and taking from case a cigarette, which he lights*). I forget now what the penalty for assault and battery is; but if Raddle were a younger man, and I hadn't come to see him on particular business, I'd be tempted to give him just one little tap (*doubling fist*) to teach him politeness. But I suppose that wouldn't be diplomacy.

RAD. (*coughing*). Put that infernal joss-stick out, sir! Burn a rag—anything but that! (BRYCE *lays down the cigarette.*) And six are—and six are — (*Flinging paper on table.*) There, now you've made me lose my count! Young man, I told you the last time you came in here with that book —

BR. Book? What book?

RAD. Mrs. Somebody's Cook-lady's Guide, "How to prepare a six-course dinner from the leavings of the day before." I sha'n't buy it. Now will you *walk* out, or must I ring for the janitor? (*Rises.*)

BR. I shouldn't trouble the janitor if I were you. Besides, it might not be good policy.

RAD. (*standing at R. of table*). Policy—you can't sell me any policy tickets.

BR. No?

RAD. Or if it's insurance, you can't insure my life.

BR. A thing of such slight value would hardly be worth the necessary outlay, I should say.

RAD. (*hotly*). And let me tell you, sir —

BR. (*in like manner*). And let me tell *you*, sir, that I do not purpose to remain here while you run through the business directory in search of a vocation for me. (*Cooling down.*) Perhaps your practice is so large and remunerative that a new client would be a burden to you. If so, I will seek information elsewhere.

RAD. A new client! Did you say "new client"?

BR. Those were the words I used.

RAD. Ahem, ahem! Why didn't you say so at first? Won't you—er—sit down—on a chair?

BR. (*still sitting on table*). I'm very well as I am, thank you.

RAD. Yes; it wasn't *that* I had in mind, but I believe you are sitting on my luncheon; and I regret to say that a most perverse and distressing state of chronic digestive disarrangement has forced me to abjure *warm* bread. Otherwise I shouldn't speak of it.

BR. (*drawing up chair from L. and seating himself*). Your explanation is satisfactory. Don't let me interfere with the banquet, pray.

RAD. (*placing his chair near BRYCE, and sitting*). That book-agent I took you for has made an intolerable nuisance of himself here. He's a villainous, disreputable rascal. There's something in your face and manner, I suppose, that reminded me of him. But I acknowledge my error. I should have asked you to sit down in the beginning.

BR. Let us say no more about it.

RAD. You said "new client," I believe.

BR. I did.

RAD. Ahem! What can I do for you, sir?

BR. (*producing a newspaper clipping*). To begin with, I desire to call your attention to the following item, clipped from a newspaper some weeks ago:—

PRESUMPTIVE EVIDENCE OF DEATH.

"Chatterton Bryce is dead. Nobody knows when or where he died, but the Probate Court has judicially determined that he is dead, and has granted administration on his estate. Some ten years ago Bryce mysteriously disappeared, since which time nobody has seen or heard of him. Two years ago his uncle died, leaving a large property, but no will. In settling up this estate, Chatterton's share was deposited in the bank, where it now lies; and in order that it might be paid to his heir, it became necessary to take out administration of his estate. The Court has appointed Ignatius Raddle administrator, it being a presumption of law that, as Bryce has not been heard of for more than seven years, he is dead."

RAD. Well?

BR. Quite correct?

RAD. Quite correct.

BR. You are then the administrator of the estate of the late Chatterton Bryce.

RAD. Administrator of the estate of the late Chatterton Bryce.

BR. A considerable property, is it?

RAD. Quite considerable.

BR. About how much, now, for an approximation?

RAD. M'm. (*Eying BRYCE keenly.*) Well—perhaps forty thousand dollars.

BR. Too bad he died, isn't it?

RAD. To what, sir, am I to attribute the unusual interest that you seem to take in this case?

BR. Well, the fact is—I'm Chatterton Bryce.

RAD. (*rising and putting back chair L.C.*). Young man, you can't play that on me. I knew Bryce—he was a youthful friend of mine—and I never forget a face. He's dead. (*Going with chair to table.*) The Court says so, and the Court ought to know. You'll have to try that on somebody else. (*Sitting and resuming his adding.*) Seven and eight are fifteen, and four are —

BR. (*rising*). Keep right on, Mr. Raddle, and when you've finished your mathematical computation, I'll prove it to you.

RAD. If you refer to the mathematical computation, proof will be unnecessary; if you refer to the statement you have just made, I don't hesitate to say that I don't believe it. I'm not very good at remembering names, but I *never* forget a face; and I tell you —

BR. (C.). And I tell *you*, sir, that I'm *not* dead, and I can prove it. Now listen! Ten years ago I had the misfortune to attend a small and very informal evening party — quite a Bohemian affair. After supper, some idiot proposed a mock marriage, to which proposition the other idiots — myself included — assented, and I was selected to play the part of bridegroom. I stood up with a charming girl, — she *was* a charming girl, — and we were married to the satisfaction of all present. After that brilliantly asinine performance, it was discovered that the blockhead who had officiated as parson was a justice of the peace, and, therefore, fully authorized to marry. I — an extremely diffident and unsophisticated youth (I may have changed some since) — was panic-stricken at the thought of what I had done; and, leaving my poor little bride in hysterics, I fled. Well, to make a long story short, I sailed next day for Paramaribo, where I remained until a few weeks ago, when, happening to come across that item in the newspaper, I concluded that it was time to return — and here I am. Don't you recognize me now?

RAD. (*rising*). Well, it's an extraordinary thing — but I think — yes, I *do* recognize you now that I've seen more of you. Yes, it's you, sure enough. It's ten years since I saw you last; but I never forget a face, though I *do* own to being a little shaky on names. How do you do? (*They shake hands.*)

BR. I'm pretty well, thank you. Of course, I shall have to reveal my identity now, in order to get possession of my property.

RAD. Well, you see, being legally dead, there is some doubt about your being brought to life again. The Court has judicially determined your decease, and it would seem almost like contempt of Court to question that decision; but I should want (*chuckles*) to look that up, first. (*Turns to law book.*)

BR. Surely you're joking?

RAD. Well, I suppose it might be arranged; but your Cousin Bartholomew will be very much disappointed.

BR. Oh, he's my heir, is he?

RAD. To be sure. He has mourned you as dead ever since your Uncle Emanuel left this property, and is even now preparing a massive and ornate monument in your memory.

BR. Dear Cousin Bartholomew!

RAD. (*handing him a drawing*). There's a drawing of it.

BR. Oh, I say, Raddle, this is *too* bad — this is outrageous. If there's anything in the world that would make a man insist on clinging to life it would be to prevent the erection of such a piece of stone-mongery as that. Who's that snivelling, pudgy little fat boy with water on the brain?

RAD. That's a cherub.

BR. And who's that long-legged, absurd looking freak in a starched toga?

RAD. That's you.

BR. (*regretfully*). And yet you say you are my friend

RAD. I call it pretty.

BR. Pretty! If Cousin Bartholomew wishes to go in for monumental high art, let him change the inscription and set that thing up in some public square where it will be appreciated. I'll boycott any graveyard that dares to let it come within its gates. (*Throws drawing on table.*) But this isn't business. What's to be done?

RAD. Well, I think we'd better go and see your Cousin Bartholomew first. I'm afraid you'll have some trouble in establishing your identity before the Court. The judge has such profound respect for his own judicial decisions that I know it will be an awful shock to him to have such a thing as this happen.

BR. My Cousin Bartholomew first, by all means. I sha'n't be sorry for him now I've seen his stoneyard testimonial.

RAD. By the way, who performed this ridiculous marriage ceremony that you speak of? Do you remember his name?

BR. Do I remember it! I should say I did — and, if living, he shall have cause to regret the activity of my retentive faculties. His name was Robinson.

RAD. What — not Crusoe Robinson?

BR. The very same. Don't tell me he's dead.

RAD. Oh, no. He's in the shaving-soap business. Gave up law years ago. In fact, I don't believe he ever practised much.

BR. No? He practised enough on me, though; and, as I never settled with him for the marriage-fee, I'm naturally desirous, after ten years of training, to liquidate. You shall take me to him, and I'll introduce myself — informally.

RAD. Very well; but remember we may need him to help identify you.

BR. (*taking up hat and coat*). Oh, there'll be no trouble about that. *He'll* be the one who'll need identifying after I've interviewed him.

RAD. (*taking his hat from top of bookcase*). Well, to think of your turning up alive! It's done me good. I haven't had a dyspeptic pang for fully ten minutes — and that's a wonder. Really, I must shake your hand again. (*Does so.*) So unlooked for. No use to marvel about that though. Unlooked for people are always turning up.

(*Enter CONSTANCE, in fashionable mourning, with folded newspaper in her hand.*)

CONSTANCE (*up stage, C.; to BRYCE*). Mr. Raddle? (BRYCE, *up R. C., bows low, and, by gesture, indicates RADDLE.*)

CON. (*coming down*). Mr. Raddle, do I come inopportunistically? So sorry. Must I go away? Don't say "yes."

RAD. (*endeavoring to conceal luncheon with legal papers*). Madam, I am at your service for a short time, with this gentleman's permission.

BR. Certainly. I'll wait outside.

CON. So good of you both. (BRYCE and RADDLE bow. BRYCE proceeds to put on his top-coat.)

RAD. (*crossing behind her to L. C., and offering chair previously occupied by BRYCE*). Pray be seated, madam.

CON. (*sitting*). I hardly know how to begin. It's very embarrassing. I'm almost sorry I came. But I wished so much to inquire about this item that appeared in the *Daily Cyclone* several weeks ago. (*Hands the paper to RADDLE, who has returned and stands C; BRYCE, who has put on his coat askew, pauses with his arms in the air.*)

RAD. (*reading*). "Presumptive Evidence of Death. Chatterton Bryce is dead" — ahem! Oh, yes. (*Glancing at BRYCE.*) What do you wish to know about it, madam? (*Aside.*) A female reporter, — I thought so.

CON. Well, Mr. Raddle, the truth is, I have some reason to suppose, — though I'm not altogether sure — women get so confused about legal matters, don't you know, — but I have been led to believe that Mr. Chatterton Bryce was my husband.

RAD. Your husband!

BR. My widow! Great Scott!

CON. Yes. Dreadful to have to put it in that way, isn't it?

RAD. Your husband! Why, madam, *this* is — (*Indicating BRYCE.*)

BR. (*stepping down C. with his overcoat half on, and elbowing RADDLE to R.C.*). Mr. Chubb, a near and very dear friend of the deceased, just arrived from Paramaribo. A remarkable coincidence, indeed.

CON. (*who meantime has risen, bowing*). You knew him then?

BR. Knew him? Better than if he had been my own brother. We were inseparable. (*Takes off top-coat and puts it on chair at back.*)

CON. Oh, sir, how strangely fortunate that I should have come when I did, isn't it, now?

BR. (C.). Yes, *very* — *very*.

CON. (*sitting*). Did he ever mention a mock-marriage in which he participated, Mr. Chubb?

BR. Y — es. I've heard him laugh about it.

CON. Laugh about it! So he was cruel enough to laugh about it, was he? How mean of him. I was the mock bride, Mr. Chubb, and I'm sure I never laughed about it. (*With signs of tearfulness.*)

BR. Well, when I say he laughed, I mean that he made that peculiar, involuntary noise which sudden merriment sometimes excites. It may have been hysterical in his case, I'm not entirely sure. (*Aside.*) She's a charming woman, if she is an adventuress.

CON. Oh, I'm sure he was not hard-hearted enough really to laugh at my misfortune, — for it *was* a misfortune, wasn't it, Mr. Chubb?

BR. (*doubtfully*). Y—es. Perhaps so. Do you mean, though, that you consider having Bryce for a husband would be a misfortune?

CON. Oh, no, no. I mean being uncertain whether or not he *was* my husband.

BR. Oh, that was a misfortune undoubtedly — undoubtedly.

CON. And did he — did you ever hear him say that he — that he thought he *was* my husband?

BR. Oh, dear no — never, *never*. He scouted the idea.

CON. (*with disappointment*). Did he really, Mr. Chubb? (*Wipes her eyes.*)

BR. (*aside to RADDLE*). It's she! I recognize her. Didn't I tell you she was a charming girl?

CON. I have always been in doubt, though I've never thought very seriously about it, Mr. Chubb, until — until lately. I was a *very* young girl ten years ago — I need not tell you that, need I, Mr. Chubb? (*BRYCE shakes his head.*) — and didn't half understand the possible seriousness of the situation. I never dared to tell my parents; and, shortly after, we moved to the far West, where I remained until very recently. Through friends, I tried at one time to learn Mr. Bryce's whereabouts; but could get no clew. I've met with serious afflictions, and lately I've been thinking more and more about that marriage; so that when I read that he was really dead, I felt that I must come here to see Mr. Raddle. I couldn't bear the uncertainty longer.

RAD. (*who meantime has been fidgetting about at table*). As I ventured to state some minutes ago, I am entirely at your service, madam.

BR. (*without noticing RADDLE*). It is no more than fair for me to say that Chatterton has left his entire property to me. I have come here to establish my claim.

CON. Oh, sir, I have not acted from mercenary motives — I hope you do not think I'm influenced by mercenary motives. Oh, how cruel of you to think I am influenced by mercenary motives. (*Weeps.*)

BR. There, there. (*Starts to take her hand, but refrains.*) Don't do that. The suspicion did cross my mind, but I am sure I did you injustice.

CON. Indeed you did. It was merely to satisfy my own distressing doubts. I had no thought of the money.

BR. Madam, I am ashamed of the suspicion.

CON. You will admit that it *is* a little hard not to know whether a lost one is to be mourned as a husband or only as a friend — an acquaintance. I know you think us women weak, inquisitive creatures, — I can see it in your eyes, — but I'm sure you won't think me unjustifiably inquisitive to wish to know this, will you?

BR. On the contrary, madam, on the contrary. (*Aside.*) She's no adventuress, thank Heaven.

CON. And so he has left you all his money.

BR. (*drawing up chair from table and sitting R.C.*). Yes, all.

CON. Did he inherit much from his uncle?

BR. About forty thousand, I believe.

CON. I'm so interested for your sake, Mr. Chubb.

BR. You are very kind indeed.

CON. I'm so glad for you too. I'm sure you must have been a good friend to him.

BR. Thank you. There was nothing, I believe, that I would not have done for him if I could.

RAD. If you'll allow me to interrupt you for a moment —

CON. (*without noticing RADDLE*). And I'm sure he didn't half deserve all you did for him, Mr. Chubb.

BR. Oh, yes, he did — more.

CON. Ah, that's your own generous heart that speaks; for I know he must have been very inconsiderate and selfish.

BR. Now, what makes you think that?

CON. Why, haven't I reasons — the best of reasons — for thinking so. Didn't he basely desert me after our marriage — if it was a marriage — when he ought, *at least*, to have called and said he 'was sorry, and would get a divorce — or something?

(*Rises and crosses to R. C.*)

BR. Perhaps he didn't want a divorce. (*Rises.*)

RAD. If I might presume to interject a remark, I should say —

BR. (*as before*). Perhaps he wasn't sorry. (*RADDLE crams his hat over his eyes in disgust and exit.*)

CON. Then why did he run away?

BR. Well — er, business may have required his presence elsewhere, and you know what a tyrant business is — no man of business is absolutely master of his own time. It may call him here, it may call him there at any moment. In this case it was probably *there*, and that was why he went. (*Aside.*) I begin to think that, in running off, I made a bigger ass of myself than I have heretofore imagined.

CON. It must have been very engrossing business that kept him away ten years. I think he was a coward.

BR. Oh, not at all — not at *all*! You don't know the man. He was, in my opinion, the very soul of bravery and honor, and I claim to know more about him than any living person. I should have been so pleased to introduce you to him in order that you might correct these false impressions; but he's gone on high — it's too late.

CON. What killed him, Mr. Chubb?

BR. He — he was bitten.

CON. Bitten?

BR. Yes; bitten by a snake and died within four hours, in the most terrible agony. I killed the snake myself.

CON. When and where did this happen? (*Sitting R.C.*)

BR. A few months ago in Paramaribo, madam, where we lived together like brothers.

CON. Poor fellow! Shabbily as he used me, I can't help pitying him.

BR. Pitying him, madam?

CON. I mean, of course, for his terrible and untimely death.

BR. Oh! You may well do that. It was very sad. He died hard. He had so much to live for.

CON. What was it, Mr. Chubb? Had he formed any attachment for —

BR. Oh, no, nothing of that kind. He was always true to his first love, I assure you.

CON. And which one was that?

BR. His first — his only love — you, madam, you.

CON. But, Mr. Chubb, when I asked you a few moments ago if Mr. Bryce considered himself my husband, you replied that he scouted the idea.

BR. Yes, yes, I know I did. I meant that he "scouted" it in the sense of cautiously examining into the matter, at a distance — you understand. Perhaps I didn't express myself as clearly as I should have done; but I know that Bryce came to the conclusion that he ought to return to America and claim you.

CON. Then why didn't he do so?

BR. (*sitting on CONSTANCE'S L.*). Madam, he had just settled the business of which I spoke, and was on the point of sailing when he was thrown from his horse.

CON. Thrown from his horse?

BR. Yes; and broke his neck.

CON. Now, Mr. Chubb, you said he was bitten.

BR. So he was. He was thrown from his horse and fell heavily upon the back of his neck. That was what started up the snake and made it bite.

CON. But he lived four hours after that?

BR. Y — es. Science records other instances of people living for some time with their necks broken. It is somewhat unusual, I believe — but *his* was an unusual case, you know.

CON. Very unusual.

BR. Besides, he wanted to live that, he might return, throw himself at your feet, and ask forgiveness for his seeming indifference.

CON. Oh, did he, — did he?

BR. It's a fact. "O Constance," he used to exclaim — your name is Constance, I believe.

CON. Yes.

BR. "O Constance," he would cry out, "what must you think of me — what must you think of me!" And then the big,

scalding tears would course down his cheeks, and his whole frame would be shaken with pent-up emotion.

CON. Dear, dear Chatterton.

BR. (*aside*). Oh, to hear her speak my name like that! (*Aloud.*) Why during his last illness, when he lay tossing about on his bed for so many weary weeks —

CON. Weeks, Mr. Chubb? Why he died in four hours!

BR. Oh, yes, yes, to be sure. But it *seemed* weeks to those who knelt at his bedside. As a matter of fact, it was just four hours — I timed him most exactly. There's the very watch I did it with. (*Showing watch.*) But let us not dwell upon details. They are most distressing to me. Suffice it to say that he loved you, and asked me to seek you out and tell you so. "Find her, Ferguson," he cried —

CON. Ferguson? Why you told me your name was Chubb!

BR. So it is — Ferguson Chubb. "Find her," he cried, "if you have to seek her at the end of the earth or beyond, and make reparation."

CON. What sort of reparation?

BR. Why, anything — everything. (*Rising and putting back chair, L.*)

CON. But he left you all his money, you say.

BR. That I might the better carry out the conditions of this sacred trust.

CON. And when we began this conversation you gave me to understand that Mr. Bryce cared nothing about me — don't deny it.

BR. True, true, but I did that to try you. You see, I was not acquainted with you then — as I feel that I now am; and I didn't know but that you were a — a —

CON. A fraud? Oh, fie, Mr. Chubb! And how do you know now that I am not?

BR. Ah, madam, Bryce has so many times described you so accurately, has spoken in such glowing terms of your remarkable beauty, your goodness, your many virtues — all of which I now recognize — that I am certain there is no mistake.

CON. I wonder if a mock-marriage, performed as that was, by one who is authorized to marry, is really valid?

BR. Unquestionably — and if it isn't it ought to be.

CON. (*rising*). Why that reminds me, I came here to ask Mr. Raddle about it. Mr. Raddle; why if he hasn't gone out without saying anything, and left us here together! Well, I think *that* was rude.

BR. Never mind, that's Raddle's way. We will assume that the marriage was valid.

CON. But I should rather —

BR. I insist on assuming that the marriage was valid, and I shall proceed to carry out my instructions under that assumption.

CON. O Mr. Chubb, you are very kind.

BR. Not at all. I simply do my duty. To begin with —

CON. (*taking up drawing from table*). Why, what is this?

BR. Oh, that's a little memorial that we have been getting up for him. What do you think of it — rather neat, eh?

CON. Oh, but he didn't look like that, did he?

BR. It is considered a speaking likeness.

CON. (*eying the drawing critically and sighing*). Well, my recollection of him is that he was very plain, but he must have changed for the worse. He looks *good* though, and that's *the* thing to be desired in a husband, of course, isn't it now?

BR. Decidedly.

CON. Yes, he looks good. Poor, dear creature. (*Kissing picture.*)

BR. (*aside*). She is prepared to love me for myself alone! Glorious! (*Aloud.*) Be seated, madam. You loved him then?

CON. (*sitting R. C.*). Oh, yes, I couldn't help it. I admired him — at a distance — the first time I ever saw him; and in spite of his running away, in spite of his seeming indifference, the feeling of admiration grew to one of love. It was all so romantic — so unusual. I have invented all sorts of excuses for him to satisfactorily account for his conduct, and now you have made it all so beautifully clear. (*Rises.*) Oh, yes, now I realize how much I did love him, Mr. Chubb. Oh, why did he die and leave me to weep alone! (*Crosses with handkerchief to eyes, and sits L.*)

BR. (*drawing up the other chair, sitting and taking her hand*). Poor child!

CON. O Mr. Chubb.

BR. Do not be alarmed. Let me be your comforter. If Bryce is hovering about you now — and who shall say that he is not? — I am sure he approves. I am discretion itself. Lean on me. (*Puts her head on his shoulder.*) You'll feel better soon.

CON. I feel better already. How good of you too — that about the sacred trust. Are you sure you meant it? (*BRYCE nods.*) Not that I care for the money one bit, but it is so gratifying to have people trust you, and believe in you, and do you little kindnesses. Oh, you will not find me ungrateful! But really I ought to go. (*Rises.*) Is my bonnet on straight? Yes? It isn't right, you know, for me to stay; and since you mean to carry out Mr. Bryce's wishes in the matter, perhaps, after all, there is no need of my seeing Mr. Raddle. If Mr. Bryce was satisfied, surely I ought to be.

BR. (*who has risen with her*). Suppose, now, that Bryce should return to you, as from the grave, penniless, would you still love him, even in his poverty?

CON. (*with apprehension*). But he won't return from the grave, penniless, will he? Oh, yes, of course, I should love him — more.

BR. Would you live upon a crust of bread? (*Taking a crust from table.*) Now, there is a crust of bread. Mark it. We often

hear it mentioned poetically, but here is the stern reality. If your worthy, but, we will assume, pecuniarily unfortunate husband were to enter and say, "There, my love, I have toiled hard for your sake, and here is the result of my day's labor," would you cheerfully share it with him without complaining? (*Hands her the crust.*)

CON. I would do more than share it with the man I loved; I would say, "Take it all." (*Hands it back to him, and fastidiously brushes her gloves.*)

BR. (*aside*). Noble, unselfish woman! And this is the treasure I have ignored all these years! (*Aloud.*) Madam, your sentiments do you credit. I do not hesitate to say that Bryce made a fatal mistake in allowing business to stand in the way of domestic happiness all these years.

CON. That was just like a man.

BR. Like some men, but not like all. It would not be *my* way, I assure you — not after this experience. And now I come to a very delicate point in connection with the fulfilment of Bryce's dying request. Shortly before he breathed his last, he called me to him, and said, "Chubb, old boy" —

CON. What, with a broken neck?

BR. N — yes. His neck was broken, but his vocal organs were in excellent order. "Chubb, old boy," said he, "I want you to take care of my Constance. Tell her from me that, if not contrary to her wishes, I desire her to become your wife. Take her, my boy, she is yours, bless you." And then he called for a thimbleful of brandy, and soon after expired. (*Turns away from her and wipes his eyes.*)

CON. (L. C.). O Mr. Chubb!

BR. Touching, was it not? I feel sure that we both honor his memory too much to disregard so particular a request as that; and, even in this short time, I have come to love you so, Constance. (*Attempts to take her hand.*)

CON. (*crossing to R. to avoid him*). And was the — the pecuniary disbursement of which you spoke at all contingent upon the carrying out of this last request?

BR. (C.). It was his wish, but not his command.

CON. I merely asked to assure myself that your profession of love is entirely sincere and disinterested.

BR. Oh, entirely sincere and disinterested. I hope you don't think I am influenced by mercenary motives.

CON. One can never be too sure about such things. As the friend of Mr. Bryce, I am prepared to value your friendship most highly. Indeed, I will not attempt to deny that you have made a not unfavorable impression upon me; but — pardon my frankness — this declaration of love, coming so closely upon your statement that you are instructed to turn the property over to me, does suggest a mercenary motive, don't you know.

BR. But, hang it, Constance, I haven't said — yes, I have too; but I have trusted *you*, can't you trust me?

CON. I don't know, I must consider. (*Going.*)

BR. But you're not going away?

CON. I have stayed too long. Besides, Mr. Raddle does not seem to desire me for a client; and I think that, on the whole, I had better seek legal advice elsewhere. If it turns out that this mock marriage has the force of a real marriage, and that I am, as you believe, the widow of Chatterton Bryce, be assured that my dear husband's friend shall always find me at home and glad to see him when he calls, and ever ready to render him any assistance, pecuniary or otherwise, that he may desire. Good-by. (*Offers hand.*)

BR. Well, *this* is cool.

CON. Ah, now you're angry.

BR. Angry, well who wouldn't be? This is not what I expected.

CON. Ah, now don't be silly, Ferguson — you see I accept you as an intimate acquaintance. Can't you see I'm only half in earnest?

BR. Is that it? You gave me the cold horrors. You certainly dissemble well.

CON. Besides (*seriously*), you ought to be able to realize that, having but lately found out that I have lost him — I mean lost him for good — your proposal of marriage is extremely painful and distressing to me. Oh, let me mourn him for a little while. (*Crosses to L. and sits disconsolately.*)

BR. Oh, that puts a different look upon it all — quite a different look. (*Aside.*) She mourns my loss; capital! (*Aloud.*) I beg your pardon, mourn by all means. I should have waited until you put aside the garb of sorrow which I see you wear in memory of the departed.

CON. (*rising*). Yes, but — (*Hesitating.*) I did not put on mourning for him, though it now serves a double purpose.

BR. (*with grave tenderness*). Ah, you have lost a relative?

CON. N-no. Not exactly.

BR. A friend, then?

CON. Not an ordinary friend. You see, I married.

BR. *Married!*

CON. Yes, and I buried him not long ago.

BR. *What?*

CON. I thought you'd be surprised, but I felt that perhaps you ought to know about it. He was much older than I, and so decrepit. It was not a love-match.

BR. Do you mean to tell me that you married another man?

CON. Yes. Mamma arranged it. Are you much disappointed? Spoils all the romance, does it? I'm *so* sorry.

BR. Bigamist!

CON. Oh, don't say that!

BR. False, treacherous, designing bigamist!

CON. (*in tears*). Oh, how awful! I never thought of it before. Oh, what a dreadful wretch I must be! (*Sinking into chair L. and wringing her hands.*)

BR. Deliberately to ignore your absent husband and contract a marriage with — oh, shameful, shameful!

CON. Oh, don't go on like that! Spare me. I tell you I never seriously believed I was married to Bryce until lately. But, of course, if I was, I couldn't marry anybody else, could I? And yet I've gone and done it, oh, dear me, oh, dear me!

BR. State prison, madam; a felon's cell; eternal disgrace to yourself and to him. How do you like the prospect?

CON. I deserve it; I deserve it! Oh, how fortunate Mr. Bryce did not live to know this.

BR. Oh, you think so, do you? You're glad he's dead, are you? You shall not have even that satisfaction. Know then that I am Chatterton Bryce!

CON. (*rising*). Ah! (*Screams.*)

BR. Yes, Chatterton Bryce, your wronged, your deserted, your indignant husband. (*CONSTANCE goes to him imploring.*) Woman, avaunt! (*Gets on other side of table. She follows him, passing in front of table. He retreats until their positions are reversed, he being at C. and she R., with the table between them.*) Keep away from me. Avaunt, will you? I returned to seek you; I became fascinated by those fatal siren charms; I was prepared to disclose my identity and take you to my heart; but now all is at an end. I shall not advertise my disgrace to the world by instituting proceedings in the divorce court. (*Melodramatically.*) No; go your way. Never let me see you again. Farewell, farewell forever! (*About to rush off.*)

(*Enter RADDLE.*)

RAD. (C.). It's all right.

BR. (L.). What's all right?

RAD. That nonsense of yours about the marriage

BR. Nonsense, eh? Good. This lady and I now know each other perfectly, and (*sarcastically*) we have just concluded to regard it all as entire nonsense.

RAD. Oh, she's found you out, has she? Well, I met Robinson in the street; knew him at once, for I never forget a face. He remembered all about the mock-marriage; said his commission as justice of the peace had expired when he went through the ceremony, so he couldn't have married anybody if he'd wanted to. Besides, he didn't really pronounce you man and wife, after all, but just mumbled and pretended he had done so, to help along the joke. (*Goes to table.*)

BR. Thank goodness! then I escape the odium of — stop! Light breaks in upon me. If the marriage didn't stand, then we were not married.

CON. No, no.

BR. And if we were not married, then either of us might marry.

CON. Yes, yes.

BR. And you had a perfect right to marry old what-you-may-call-him, or anybody else.

CON. So I had, and I'm no bigamist, after all!

BR. No; and I — Constance! (*Opens his arms.*)

CON. Chatterton! (*Rushing towards him.*)

BR. (*checking her*). One moment. (*To RADDLE.*) You're sure you're not mistaken?

RAD. (*edging off*). Sure.

BR. No doubt about it?

RAD. (*dryly*). None whatever. (*Exit.*)

(BRYCE again opens his arms; CONSTANCE and he embrace effusively.)

CURTAIN.

THE INSURANCE AGENT

An Eccentric Character and Comedy Sketch

BY HARRY S. MILLER

*Author of "The Cat Came Back," "You Can't Lose Me, Charley," "A
Cruel Hiss," "My Sister's Beau," "The Telephone Girl," etc.*

THE INSURANCE AGENT

CHARACTERS.

WILLIE WATE, *Insurance Agent.*

HELEN FRENCH,	{	<i>These two characters to be</i>	{	<i>Soubrette Maid.</i>
ROSIE RARE,		<i>done by one or two,</i>		<i>Daughter of the house.</i>

NOTE.—This sketch was first produced by Harry C. Bryant and Miss Carrie Fulton, Miss Fulton playing both the female parts. This sketch can be done by two or three persons, and business introduced to suit.

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THE INSURANCE AGENT.

SCENE.—*A parlor. Small centre table L. or R., with paper, books, and box of cigars. Sofa, chairs, pictures, etc.*

WILLIE WATE *enters C. D., walks half down stage ; speaks.*

WILLIE. This is a swell place ; it's all right by appearance. I think I can do some business here. (*Walks towards table, picks up box of cigars, takes one, lights it ; attitude ; speaks.*) Oh, I don't know ; this is easy. (*Looks at cigar.*) That's all right ; good fellow to use such good cigars as that. (*Takes another ; places in pocket.*) That's for after dinner.

[*Starts to walk around.*

HELEN *enters C. D. ; stands in doorway ; screams.*

HELEN. A man in the house ! I knew I heard a noise.

WILLIE. Where is the man ? If you say the word I'll fire him out. [*Starts to look under table and chairs for the man.*

HELEN. You are the man I mean.

WILLIE. Thanks awfully. (*Bows, etc.*) I thought there was an intruder.

HELEN. How did you get in here ?

WILLIE. Just the same as the rest of the family.

HELEN. You don't want me to think that you are one of the family, do you ?

WILLIE. My little girl, I may yet pay you your salary in this family.

HELEN. Why didn't you announce your coming ? What do you suppose that button is at the front door for ?

WILLIE. Oh ! that's to get in on the push ; but what's the use of disturbing the whole house, when you can go quiet about it ?

HELEN. Well, I must say I admire your cheek.

WILLIE. Thank you very kindly. (*Approaches HELEN.*) Suppose I had touched the button ?

HELEN (*indignantly*). That's what it's for, and it wouldn't be the first time it was touched to-day.

WILLIE. Then think of the compassion I had for you ; I saved you the trouble of running to the door, when you might have had your hands full of dough ; and then it's ten to one whether I would have got in or not. I don't take no chances.

HELEN. Your impudence beats anything that I know of, and the best thing you can do is to leave this house.

WILLIE. My dear little girl, the house is all right as far as I have seen, and I'll leave it for the owner.

HELEN. What is your business here, and who are you, sir ?

WILLIE. I could ask you the same, but I know it. Who I am, well, every one knows me that has met me, and what's my business—well, everything that comes my way.

HELEN. Are you one of those bothering agents ?

WILLIE (*laying hand on her shoulder*). My dear little girl, do I look it ?

HELEN. If you have any books to sell——

WILLIE. Search me.

HELEN. Or sewing machines——

WILLIE. Do you see any threads hanging on my clothes ? Be nice, and I'll tell you. (*Places arm round her waist.*) I presume you are the maid around the house, by all appearance.

HELEN. I am.

[*Smiles.*]

WILLIE. And your name is——?

HELEN. Helen French.

WILLIE. Are you as bad in English or German ? (*Squeezes HELEN tighter ; HELEN makes believe to get away ; WILLIE WATE still embraces her ; HELEN smiling, and looking ashamed.*) It's with your master or mistress that my business is.

HELEN. But they are both out, sir.

WILLIE. Out ! (*Kisses HELEN ; aside.*) This is too easy. (*Aloud.*) I'm sorry they couldn't have waited for me. Then you are all alone ?

HELEN. Oh, no, the daughter is at home.

WILLIE (*drops arm from HELEN'S waist*). Is there any danger of her intruding ?

HELEN (*smiling*). I guess not. [*Gets closer to WILLIE as he moves away.*]

WILLIE. Just tell, ah——

HELEN. Miss Rosie.

WILLIE. Yes, the daughter. Tell her I would do business with her, and that I await her pleasure in the parlor.

[*HELEN at C. D. ; throws kisses to WILLIE ; he returns some. Exit HELEN with a back kick.*]

WILLIE. I'm glad that's over. (*Takes out book ; writes.*) Helen French ; I won her easy ; now for the next. I wonder if

the daughter is as easy ; if so, I can get the whole family into this company. Oh ! they're all coming my way.

[Introduce specialty here, song or dance, should two persons do this sketch. If three persons, omit specialty]

ROSIE enters C. D.

ROSIE. Sir ; I believe you have some business with me.

WILLIE. My dear Miss Rosie, I have a bunch of it.

ROSIE (*aside*). A bunch of it ! I wonder what he means by a bunch of business.

WILLIE. Beg pardon, please be seated, while I relate my business. (ROSIE *sits on sofa* ; WILLIE *stands beside the end*.) I did intend meeting your father or mother, but probably you can intercede for me ; I can see by your face you have a good heart.

ROSIE. Do you think so ? (*Laughing.*) I may deceive you on that point.

WILLIE. Oh, don't tell me that ; I could never believe it. But, as I said, you might get your parents interested in my behalf. You see, I represent the "If You Get It" Life Insurance Company, and one of the best in the country.

ROSIE. But we are all insured in the —— Company.

WILLIE. Ah, yes ; they pay in case of death, and we do too, if you get it. It's not the money, but the notoriety. Just think ! When you die, your case with our company naturally comes up in court, and one out of every twenty gets their money, and that one we compromise on ten per cent. Imagine your picture in all the leading dailies of the country, and your name in big letters ! Think of it ! Something you could not do in life.

ROSIE. But what benefit would that be to the deceased ?

WILLIE. That's it. No good whatever. But think of your friends, male and female ; think of your own family and relatives ; they would pick up the paper and criticise your picture. Some would say, "It looks just like her ;" others would say, "The eyes are not natural, the mouth is out of place," or "I never saw her in that dress, I wonder where she had it made ; it's awfully unbecoming." That is our aim, to keep you before your friends and public, after you have passed those golden gates.

ROSIE (*rising from sofa*). Well, that is quite a novel idea, after all. It is a great scheme, I must say.

WILLIE. Just let me fill you up.

[Takes book out.]

ROSIE (*indignantly*). Sir !

WILLIE. Allow me to finish. I would say, fill you up one of these blanks. I can give you cut rates, as I like your ways. Are you engaged ? Don't get offended at my abrupt questions. As I was going to say, I would lower the rates for two.

ROSIE. I am happy to say——

WILLIE. Engaged!

[*Opens book.*]

ROSIE. No!

WILLIE. No? and so young.

ROSIE. Do you know you interest me?

WILLIE. Do I? (*Throws book on floor; gets closer to her.*)
Have I made a hit with you?

ROSIE (*indifferently*). Somewhat!

WILLIE. It is the first, then, I have made since I left the
"Early In" Opera Company.

ROSIE (*excited; runs to him*). Were you ever on the stage,
the real stage?

WILLIE. I am glad to acknowledge the fact.

ROSIE (*getting interested; comes closer*). Oh! tell me some-
thing of the stage; about the back of the stage—don't keep me
in suspense.

WILLIE. Not here, Rosie; excuse me for calling you
Rosie.

ROSIE. Oh! call me anything, only do tell me something of
behind the scenes. (*Whispers in her ear.*) A cold bottle, and
a bird—all of them?

WILLIE. Not all of them, only a few of the real ones.

ROSIE. Do you still sing?

WILLIE. Oh! occasionally; but I presume you do some of
that yourself by the music I see laying around.

ROSIE. Oh! yes, shall I sing for you?

WILLIE. I wouldn't object to a little song. You know when
I hear singing, it always takes me back to the time my trunks
were held for the seltzer and milk. When do you expect your
folks home?

ROSIE. Not until to-morrow night; but tell me more of the
stage, tell me more.

WILLIE. Not here. Remember what I told you! (*Aside.*)
Oh! I'll own her in a minute! Two in one house! Oh,
this is too easy. (*ROSIE lays head on WILLIE'S shoulder, looks
up in face.*) What is this, Rosie?

[*Takes off fake mole from her face;
shows her the same.*]

ROSIE. Oh! that is a mole, or, in other words, a mark of
beauty.

WILLIE (*places it back anywhere on face*). Where did you
get it?

ROSIE. What! The mole?

WILLIE. No; the beauty. (*ROSIE breaks away from him,
angrily.*) Just let me fill you up a blank. Think of the glory
you get, the notoriety after you are dead; you can't beat it. I
want to get your whole family in this. When you make a

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family party of it, you can always keep one member before the multitude.

[*Picks up hat as if about to leave.*]

ROSIE (*runs towards him*). You are not going to leave? We are going to have dinner shortly, and I counted on your staying. I'm so lonely, while papa and mamma are away. Won't you stay?

WILLIE (*aside*). Dinner? Where have I heard that word before? Will I stay? Willie Wate, my name is as good as my word. (*Aloud, taking ROSIE'S two hands in his.*) I am not going, Rosie; I was merely moving my hat, as it gets tired resting in one place. About the dinner,—I'll join you with all my heart.

ROSIE. Oh! I thought you were going to desert me.

WILLIE (*with arm round ROSIE*). Desert you, darling! not for all of McKinley's Prosperity. Rosie, do you know I could love you for yourself alone, without your father's railroad stocks.

ROSIE. So soon, and not six o'clock. Tell me that again.

WILLIE. No, darling, you might be disappointed.

ROSIE (*breaks from him, crying*). Then you do not love me as you led me to believe.

WILLIE. Rosie, do you doubt my love for you? Why, you must have been reading a German paper.

ROSIE (*sadly*). I can't read. I can do nothing but write checks.

WILLIE. Write checks! After all my wanderings has it come to this? (*Grasps her hand; hisses.*) Suppose I should marry you, would you disgrace me by still writing checks?

ROSIE (*drops on her knees*). No, no, not for the world! Don't leave me in this minute of suspense! (*Rises quick.*) It's all over.

WILLIE. What is over.

ROSIE. My suspense; I was kneeling on a tack.

WILLIE. You'll never kneel on another tack without knowing it. (*Draws her back.*) Kneel on this mat and swear.

ROSIE (*kneels, saying*). Spare me, spare me, and give me a chance to wear my new bicycle suit, not home from the tailor's yet! Spare me!

WILLIE. Arise, Rosie, and may your bloomers be a fit.

ROSIE. Oh! you have spared me.

WILLIE. Spared you? What have I attempted?

ROSIE. Nothing.

WILLIE. Then I must have spared you. [*Hug each other.*]

ROSIE. Hark! some one comes. (*Break away.*) It may be father returning.

WILLIE. Heavens! Have I been here until to-morrow night?

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ROSIE. Yes, I almost forgot my appetite.

WILLIE (*aside*). And mine has been whispering
hurry up, and spoil the table.

ROSIE. Are you ready to join for dinner?

WILLIE. At a minute's notice.

ROSIE. Then we're off for dinner.

[*Finish with song*]

CURTAIN.

Interviewing a Granger

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Scene

BY

O. E. YOUNG

AUTHOR OF "POPPING BY PROXY," "THE STRIPED SWEATER," "ALL STARS," "RIDING THE GOAT," "WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE," "WIVES WANTED IN SQUASHVILLE," "AXIN' HER FATHER," "MR. BADGER'S UPPERS," "WHO GITS DE REWARD?" "LOVE AND LATHER," "COON CREEK COURTSHIP," "LOVE AND A CARVING KNIFE," "PAT THE APOTHECARY," "STICK TO YOUR WORD, GAL," "BACK FROM THE PHILIPPINES," ETC., ETC.

Interviewing a Granger

SCENE.—*A roadside near the home of Timothy Hay.*

(*Enter TIMOTHY HAY, R., carrying a hoe and mopping face with a red bandana.*)

TIMOTHY. There! Thank fortin that air piece o' corn is hoed, but it's the last piece I'll ever plant on shears. It's pesky hard work takin' keer on it, an' it's tew blamed back'ard ter 'mount ter much. Hoein' is 'bout as hard work as dodgin' them consarned reporters the *Screamer* keeps sendin' eout ter try an' interview me. (*Sits on rock and fans himself violently.*) Timothy Hay's the feller what's been tew much for 'em all, though. (*Looking off L.*). Hullo! who's that? I'm blest ef it don't look like another of 'em. Ef 'tis, I'll fix him. (*Fans himself*).

(*Enter ADOLPHUS UPPERCRUST, L.*)

ADOLPHUS (*stopping*). Good aftawnoon, my friend.

TIMOTHY (*surlily*). I hain't yer friend. I never see ye afore in all my born days, 'n' I don't keer ef I never see ye agin.

ADOLPHUS (*staring*). Why, you need not get angwy. I only wemarked that it was a good aftawnoon.

TIMOTHY. 'Tain't a good arternoon, nuther; it's tew pesky hot. (*Mops face.*)

ADOLPHUS. You seem wather out of tempaw, but you need not be mad with me. I'm only Adolphus Upper-crust, the new weportaw for the *Squeamaw*, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. Ye don't look half baked, so I sorter thought ye mought be the *undercrust*.

ADOLPHUS. You are a man of vewy owiginal ideas, my fwiend, but I wather like you, doncher know. What are you doing heaw?

TIMOTHY. Can't ye see I hain't dewin' nothin'? I got it all done.

ADOLPHUS. You look as if you had been engaged in agwiculchawal pursuits.

TIMOTHY. Wall, I hain't. I ben hoin' corn.

ADOLPHUS (*looking R., toward road*). Oh, so that cawn is yours, then? It looks wather yellow, doncher know.

TIMOTHY (*shortly*). Sartin it does. 'Twas yeller corn I planted.

ADOLPHUS. I mean it looks as if it might be pwetty late.

TIMOTHY. Proberly. It's the late kind.

ADOLPHUS. I didn't mean that, eithaw. I mean it looks small.

TIMOTHY. Course it does; it is that kind. 'Twas a leetle small, late, yeller cawn I planted.

ADOLPHUS. No, no; you seem bound to misundawstand me, baw Jove you do. I mean it don't look as if you would get more than half a cwop.

TIMOTHY. I don't s'pect tew. I planted it at the halves, any way.

ADOLPHUS. Well, well; nevaw mind! (*Changing subject*). Do you know Timothy Hay?

TIMOTHY (*looking at him sharply*). Yep.

ADOLPHUS. What sort of a fellow is he, any way?

TIMOTHY. He 's 'bout the orneriest old cuss in ten taownships.

ADOLPHUS. Why, what has he done?

TIMOTHY. Oh, nothin' very bad. Jes' broke both laigs for a fool reporter that come daown here ter write him up, an' sent another hum with his arm in a sling. Ye see Tim's a leetle bit agin bein' interviewed, as they called it.

ADOLPHUS (*alarmed*). I should think so, baw Jove I

Mr. W. What is it?

Pat. That medicine, sir, is Marry-bus balsam.

Mr. W. How is it that my daughter is ill, and I have to take the medicine?

Pat. That is the peculiarity of me medicines.

Enter DICK and MISS W., L. H.

Mr. W. Ah, how do you feel now, my daughter?

Miss W. A. U.

Mr. W. A little better, eh? I'm glad to hear it.

Pat. Magnum Bonum. E. Unibus Plurom. Papa, ye'll tell your servants to retire, and I will perform the operation on your daughter.

Mr. W. To perform an operation.

Pat. Obey the doctor. (*MR. W. waves them off; to WHITE.*) Now, Mr. Apothecary, of the short neck, while I explain to Mr. Warren the disease of his daughter, ye sit beside her and by degrees administer to her all of the contents in that pot. Be careful and don't lose none of it.

White. I will employ all my attention.

Mr. W. Doctor, I would like to see how the apothecary gives her the medicine.

Pat. Ye are mistaken, Papa. Ye must not look at her or go near her. Look here; come and sit by me, and I will explain everything. (*PAT takes chairs and places one for MR. W. with his back to WHITE. He then sits facing MR. W. so he can see what is going on. WHITE and MISS W. make love, etc.*) Great and ingenious questions and answers are made by the professors to the students, and the students to the professors. The question if a man is more—more—curable than the woman, or the female is more curable than the male—some they approve, others they deny—and still others affirm. Now, I don't—but—(*MR. W. tries to look towards MISS W.; PAT stops him*), look at me, now. The woman, as far, perhaps, as they say, is just like yer daughter. She would if she could. (*Bus.*) Look at me! At the moment of the act, supposing your child was—

Miss W. Certainly not, my dear, I will never change.

Mr. W. What's that? As I live, my daughter spoke. Oh, wise and learned man!

Pat. The medicine has produced the effect.

Miss W. Yes, dear father, I have recovered my speech again, to ask you that Mr. White shall be my husband.

Mr. W. But—

Miss W. I will never consent to marry anybody else. Mr. White or death. I am decided!

ADOLPHUS. But you are not pwopwietaw of the cawn-field this side?

TIMOTHY. Nope. Jes' planted it on shears.

ADOLPHUS. On *sheaws*? Why did you plant your cawn on sheaws?

TIMOTHY. Oh, jes' ter commodate the *cut*-worms. Haw! haw! haw! (*Laughs uproariously.*)

ADOLPHUS. He! he! he! (*Chuckling.*) You're a vewy ludicwous cweachaw, doncher know. Are you a native heawabouts?

TIMOTHY (*indignantly*). No, I hain't. The natives hereabouts was all Injins.

ADOLPHUS. At any wate you must have been bawn *somewhere*.

TIMOTHY. S'pose so; I don't remember.

ADOLPHUS. Well, where did they tell you you were bawn?

TIMOTHY. Did ye ever hear o' Salt Lake City?

ADOLPHUS. Certainly.

TIMOTHY. Well, I warn't born thar.

ADOLPHUS. Then what made you speak of it?

TIMOTHY. 'Cause dad uster live thar.

ADOLPHUS. Where does he live now?

TIMOTHY. Not anywhar. He's got all over it. (*Blows nose violently.*)

ADOLPHUS. Oh, your paw is dead, then?

TIMOTHY. S'pose so; 'tenny rate we buried him. (*Leans back and puts thumbs in armholes of vest.*)

ADOLPHUS. How long since you lost your paternal pwogenitaw?

TIMOTHY. Never lost him. Haow in thunder could we buried him ef he'd ben lost?

ADOLPHUS. I mean how long has he been dead?

TIMOTHY. Jest as long 's he was erlive.

ADOLPHUS. How long was that?

TIMOTHY. I dunno. 'Bout five foot eight inches, I reckon. (*Crosses legs and makes attempt to scratch himself between the shoulderblades.*)

ADOLPHUS. No, no, no; can't you compwehend my meaning? When did you pwogenitaw die?

TIMOTHY. The old man warn't a janitor; he was a farmer.

ADOLPHUS. No mattaw about that. Since when has he been dead?

TIMOTHY. Even sence his heart stopped beatin', I reckon.

ADOLPHUS (*waving hands distractedly*). No, no. Can't you tell how long a pewiod of time has elapsed since your fathaw became defunct?

TIMOTHY. It must be nigh onter ten year sence the old man defunked.

ADOLPHUS. That is what I wanted to know. What did he die of?

TIMOTHY (*taking off hat and scratching head*). Le's see. (*Doubtfully.*) I b'lieve 'twas of a Fourth o' July.

ADOLPHUS (*impatiently*). No, no; not that. I mean *why* did he die?

TIMOTHY. 'Cause he couldn't help hissself. (*With assumed candor.*) Why, mister, his wind stopped. (*Rams hands in pockets.*)

ADOLPHUS. Did your father die with a will?

TIMOTHY. No; it was almightily agin his will.

ADOLPHUS (*in vexation*). I mean did he leave a will when he died?

TIMOTHY (*with assumed simplicity*). Ef he ever made one he must have, 'cause he sartinly didn't take it with him.

ADOLPHUS. I see. You think he died intestate.

TIMOTHY. I don't think no sech thing. He died eout in York State.

ADOLPHUS. Did he leave a wife.

TIMOTHY. No; marm left him—when I was 'bout a dozen year old.

ADOLPHUS. How many years old are you now?

TIMOTHY. Not any. I'm fifty years young, an' gittin' more so every day.

ADOLPHUS. How many childwen in your family?

TIMOTHY (*angrily*). Not any, consarn ye! I'm an old bachelder. (*Jumps up and advances threateningly.*)

ADOLPHUS (*alarmed; backing off*). Don't get angwy

TIMOTHY. Did ye afore?

ADOLPHUS. Before? Why, how in the world could I?

TIMOTHY. Dunno. Jest axed for information, that's all.

ADOLPHUS. It weally is the stwangest weathaw I evaw saw. Wemarkable, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. It would be more remarkable ef we didn't have any.

ADOLPHUS. Why, what an ideaw! I have found the stwangest man and the stwangest place I evaw saw, doncher know. What sort of a hole is this, any way? (*Stares around with open mouth.*)

TIMOTHY (*craning neck from side to side and peering into it*). Wall, I don't skursly know, but I s'pose 'twas made for a maouth. It's tarnally out o' shape, though.

ADOLPHUS. What do you mean?

TIMOTHY. Oh, nothin'—'tenny rate I hain't mean 'nough ter be a reporter.

ADOLPHUS (*angrily*). Don't you insult me, or I'll give you a piece of my mind. I weally will, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. Don't ye dew it, sonny; there hain't any ter spare.

ADOLPHUS. Look here, fellow! Do you mean to say I haven't any mind?

TIMOTHY. Oh, no—only that ye didn't bring it with ye.

ADOLPHUS (*after a pause*). You have not yet told me your name.

TIMOTHY. Ye'll know it when ye find eout.

ADOLPHUS. You won't tell me, then?

TIMOTHY. I'll tell ye who I'm not.

ADOLPHUS. Who?

TIMOTHY. Lydia Pinkham.

ADOLPHUS (*looking him over, slowly*). No-o; I wather think not. You don't look like her—especially the whiskaws. He! he! he! (*Chuckles.*)

TIMOTHY. Consarn ye! be ye makin' fun o' my whiskers?

ADOLPHUS. No. There is only one thing could be made of them vewy successfully, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. What's that, Impidence?

ADOLPHUS. A hen's nest, baw Jove! (*Laughs.*)

TIMOTHY. Huh! Mighty smart, hain't ye, Mister Adolphus Uppercrust?

ADOLPHUS. Smart enough to get the best of you, Mistaw Timothy Hay.

TIMOTHY. Eh! (*Starts.*) How'd ye find eout who I was?

ADOLPHUS. Oh, I smelled a wat long ago.

TIMOTHY. "Smelled a wat!" I wish he'd bit yer pesky nose off! Any way ye sha'n't interview me.

ADOLPHUS. I don't want to, my fwiend.

TIMOTHY. Wh-what! Ye don't? What made ye change yer mind?

ADOLPHUS. I didn't change it. I've interviewed you alweady. I know enough about you now to wite up a wattling good stowy, doncher know.

TIMOTHY (*bewildered*). Wh-wh-why, where'd ye find it all eout?

ADOLPHUS. You told me just now, my fwiend. You can't expect, Timothy Hay, to choke off a weportaw that understands his business—especially as long as it is *gween*. He! he! he! (*Chuckles.*)

TIMOTHY. Why, I never told ye nothin' much.

ADOLPHUS. You told me enough. I can easily fake the rest.

TIMOTHY. Wall, by thunder! I begin ter think ye can. It does go agin the grain ter be wusted by a city boy with a tumbler-bottom stuck in one eye an' no more hair on his face than there is on my gran'mother's grave-stun, though.

ADOLPHUS. There's only one thing I lack now.

TIMOTHY. What's that?

ADOLPHUS. Your pictchaw to go in with my stuff, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. That ye never'll git.

ADOLPHUS. Why not? Didn't you evaw have any taken?

TIMOTHY. Yep; one.

ADOLPHUS. All wight; that will be enough. I'll take that one.

TIMOTHY. No, ye won't.

ADOLPHUS. Why not?

TIMOTHY. I told ye afore—it's taken a'ready. My cousin, Greene Grass, took it.

ADOLPHUS. Oh, I understand. Then there isn't any left?

TIMOTHY. That one is left. It left for Boston a year ago, when Greene did.

ADOLPHUS. All wight. I'm going to Boston to-morrow and I'll look your cousin up. I know him and know where he works.

TIMOTHY. Wall, by gum! You're a knowin' cuss, hain't ye?

ADOLPHUS. Good-bye, my fwiend. I must leave you now; I weally must, doncher know.

TIMOTHY. That's what I've wanted from the very fust, consarn yer pictur!

ADOLPHUS. Well, I'm going now. Expect to see yourself witten up in gweat shape in the next *Squeamarw*. Good afternoon, Mistah Hay. (*Exit L.*)

TIMOTHY (*rising and thrusting hands in pockets of overalls*). Beat at last, by thunder! Tim Hay, you're a dum sight meaner proposition than that corn ye was jest hoein', for ye've let that city dude outgin'ral ye at ev'ry p'int. Ye thought ye was some pumpkins, but when the right feller come erlong ye turned eout ter be mighty small pertaters—mighty mean an' precious few in a hill.

CURTAIN.

JACK'S BLUFF

CHARACTERS

PRUDENCE WINTRINGHAM, *tired of "prunes and prisms."*

JACK WILTON, *tired of everything but "Prudence."*

SCENE.—Living-room in the Wintringham Cottage, San Rafael.

TIME.—Five o'clock P. M.

COSTUMES.—Outing.

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Jack's Bluff

SCENE 1.—*Living-room in the Wintringham cottage, San Rafael. Time, five o'clock, P. M.*

Enter PRUDENCE, in bad temper, carrying tennis racquet. She casts racquet in one corner, cap in another. Throws herself in easy chair, R. C.

PRUDENCE. Catch me playing tennis again with Mr. Guthrie, horrid man! It's "Beg pardon, Miss Wintringham, that was awfully rude of me to send such a swift one to a lady!" or, "Just call that a let; I must remember I'm playing against a *lady*, and be more polite!" till I'm sick of the sound of his voice! I'm sure I play as well or better than he does, but of course he goes off and says, "Nice little thing, Miss Wintringham, plays jolly well for a girl. Of course I *let* her win. Polite thing, you know, when you're playing against a lady!" Let me, indeed! As if I couldn't beat his swiftest game, if he'd only play it, little goose! It's the same way in everything. Allowed to win because you're a girl—because it's *polite*! Tolerated in all games on sufferance! No wonder they think we're a nuisance, when they imagine they must pick up all our balls, and give us all the best chairs, as if our backs weren't as strong as theirs! And just because we're girls, our mouths have to be pursed up in polite little smiles and quirks, and say, "Thank you, Mr. Smith," and, "How kind of you, Mr. Jones!" when all the time we're longing to throw something at them. (*Rises and wanders about the room.*) Dear me! (*Catches sight of note on table.*) Here's that note Daisy sent me this morning. I forgot all about it. Poor Daisy! She's dead to the world since she became engaged! She used to be such a dear thing. Why is it, that as soon as a girl gets engaged, she immediately wants to marry off all her friends? Seems to think she's a special agent in such matters!

(*Reads.*) "Dear Prue. Come up to tennis and tea this afternoon, will you? Tom is coming home early, and is bringing a few men with him. Oh, by the way! Jack Wilton is one of them." (*Starts, crushes note in hand.*) Jack? (*Pause—reads.*) "You and he used to be chums long ago, didn't you? Come early. Yours in haste, DAISY M." Goodness me! Here it is five o'clock! Just my luck to miss the only excitement I've had this week! It's too late now except for the tea, and it wouldn't be polite to go for that. There it is again! Why can't one do as one likes without eternally thinking of the politeness of it! (*Seats herself at table, looks at note.*) I didn't know Tom knew Jack Wilton. Poor old Jack! I haven't seen him since—hm! He said he'd never get over it, but of course he has! No doubt he's engaged to somebody else by this time. Oh, I hope not! Why, of course! (*Laughing.*) Tom and Daisy, after the manner of engaged people, are trying to get me off the hands of the community, and have invited him over for *my* benefit. They little know I've had my chance in that direction. (*The portières at the back of room are drawn aside without PRUE'S knowledge, and JACK WILTON appears. He stops at hearing her voice, looks surprised, and listens a moment. Disappears and reappears several times during the latter part of her speech.*) Poor old Jack! When I was ten and he was twelve what good comrades we were! I was as good a fellow as he, and we were "Jack" and "Prue." Then all at once we grew up, and everything changed. I didn't, at least, I didn't want to, but Jack did, stupid thing! And mama was always saying, "Prudence, dear, you're a young lady now, and young ladies do not run nor climb trees nor fences." Oh, dear! And Jack grew so terribly polite all of a sudden, and always thought he had to dress up when he came to see me, and it was all so formal! But when he capped the climax by being sentimental, that was too much. (*JACK looks worried.*) I had to send him away. I positively couldn't stand him, he was so polite! But, ah, I missed my chum—and I do yet! If he would only come in now and slap me on the back, as he would his best *man* friend, and say, "Prue, old girl, how are you?" I could positively *love* him. (*JACK delighted.*) But if I see him tonight it will be (*rises, and goes forward, L.*), "Good-evening, Miss Wintringham, you're quite a stranger." (*Formally.*) "I am delighted to find you looking so well. Are you summering in this beautiful spot?" And I'll respond, yes,

respond is the word, while I smirk like a Cheshire cat, "Why, Mr. Wilton, I never dreamed of seeing *you* here!" (*Society tone.*) "I am charmed to see you!" Ugh! (JACK *braces up and enters noisily, singing. PRUE starts in surprise.*) Why, Mr. Wilton, I never dreamed of seeing you here! I'm so charmed to see —

JACK (*shaking her hand till she squirms*). How are you, Prue, old girl? I'm awfully glad to see you! They told me to come right in. Daisy Melliss sent me over to find out what had become of you. (*Throws himself down in easy chair, keeps his hat on, and puts up his feet.*) Said she wrote to you this morning, and thought you were coming up to play tennis.

PRUE (*incoherently*). Well—I—I —

JACK. I told her you were an old chum of mine though your tennis wasn't much. (PRUE *indignant.*) Why didn't you come? Company didn't suit, eh? You always were a particular little cuss!

PRUE (*with a "prunes and prisms" expression*). If you will allow me a word, Mr. Wilton, I can very easily explain my non-appearance. I received Daisy's note early this morning, but I had an errand in the village, and quite forgot to open it until —

JACK. Oh, don't bother! It made no difference, I assure you. Nobody seemed to mind; they had plenty without you — *good* players, too! One awfully jolly little girl. Maud — what's her name? But she doesn't need any name; she's sweet enough without one.

PRUE (*primly*). Are you speaking of Maud Benton? She *would* be pleased to hear herself spoken of in that way!

JACK. Yes, she's the one. Stunning black eyes that shine like stars when she plays tennis!

PRUE (*demurely*). You used to like blue ones best. (*Sits at table.*)

JACK. Did I? Oh, most likely I did! But I suppose a man can borrow a woman's privilege of changing her mind once in a while, can't he? Besides, black eyes give so much more character to the face, don't you think?

PRUE (*stiffly*). Oh, of course I would naturally think so, having blue ones myself!

JACK (*pretended surprise*). By Jove, so you have! I'd forgotten. No need of an apology, of course. One must not stand on ceremony with such an old pal as you are. What's that old vow we plighted (PRUE *interested*) so solemnly when

we jumped over the broomstick together? "Honest, true! Black and blue! Cross your heart and die if you do!" That's it. Only it *should* be black *or* blue *or* gray! (PRUE *disgusted*.)

PRUE. Then you don't believe in remaining faithful to one color?

JACK. Oh, what's the use, when they all smile on you so divinely? Now I can call to mind at least, let me see — (*Reflectively, beginning to count on fingers*.) I wonder how many pairs this last year. Come on, Prue (*jovially*), and I'll tell you all about them!

PRUE (*faintly, turning away*). Oh, no, no! Please don't!

JACK. Oh, very well! Thought you might feel an interest; but you never did have much of the mother Eve in you. By the way, how's the old woman?

PRUE (*astonished*). Why—w-whom do you mean, Mr. Wilton?

JACK. Eh? Your mother, of course. Didn't she come up here with you?

PRUE (*rises indignant*). How dare you speak so of dear mama? Old woman, indeed! (*Crosses to easy chair, R. C.*)

JACK (*crosses to L. C.*). Well, for the life of me I never can see the objection to that word *woman*! It seems to be an insult whichever way you put it. She *is* a woman, isn't she? I've always been under that impression anyway; and she certainly isn't young, so *there* you are! (*Conclusively*.) However, if you prefer it, *how* is Mrs. Wintringham?

PRUE (*haughtily*). She is quite well, thank you. Shall I call her down to see you? (*Half sobbing*.) You *used* to be very fond of dear mama! (*Goes towards portières*.)

JACK. Oh, well, but chaperons are out of date now, thank goodness! No, don't bother about it; I must toddle along. Aren't you coming over? Daisy thought you might be coming in late. I didn't see any use of my bothering to come for you, but she seemed to think I'd better. Seems to me she told me to urge you to come later for a dance to-night.

PRUE (*haughtily*). You are extremely urgent! However, I may go over to-night because Daisy is my dearest friend, and I shouldn't like her to be offended with me for paying so little attention to her invitations. It's too late now for the tennis part of it (*sits in easy chair*), but pray do not let me detain you from the charming society of Miss Benton—she must be wondering what has become of you!

JACK. Oh, it's a good thing to keep a girl wondering a little! By Jove! I have an idea. Daisy Melliss is getting up a picnic by moonlight for some night next week, strictly for engaged people, headed by herself and her dear Tom! (PRUE *interested*.) Idiotic notion except for the initiated! I've a great notion to cut in and get engaged to Maud for the picnic! (PRUE *turns away, very much agitated*.) A week's plenty of time. I wonder if I'd have to come over every night! I suppose so, but that's all right. There's not much doing in town this weather. Good plan, don't you think?

PRUE (*sarcastically*). Lovely! I suppose you mean just for the picnic?

JACK. Oh, I don't know! Might be a case of "From jest to earnest," you know! Well, I really must trot along. Time is precious, every minute counts. (*Takes out cigarette case*.) Can you give me a light? (PRUE *gives him box of matches off table*; JACK *leisurely lights cigarette*. Offers case to PRUE.) Have one, won't you?

PRUE (*horrified*). You know very well I never touch the horrid things! You had better save them for Miss Benton; probably she is past mistress in the art! (*Turns away*.)

JACK. Oh, you don't, eh? Don't remember keeping me company with my first, and smoking like a little steam-engine down behind your grandfather's barn? (*Slaps her on the back*.) Didn't feel very gay after it either, did you?

PRUE (*jumps; aghast*). Oh, Jack! (*Begins to cry. Facing audience*.)

JACK. Well, "au revoir!" Hope to see you this evening! I don't have to come back for you, do I?

PRUE (*controlling herself with a great effort*). Certainly not, Mr. Wilton. Father will be glad to walk over with me.

JACK. Oh, all right then! So long! [*Exit*.]

PRUE (*bursts into tears and stretches out her arms towards entrance*). Oh, Jack! The dear old Jack I used to know, come back to me!

(*Sinks into easy chair. Curtain or close in. Intermission of one minute.*)

SCENE 2.—*The same. Time the next morning, 'at eleven o'clock.*

(JACK is discovered walking about the room, waiting for PRUE.)

JACK. Well, I've been admitted, so that's an encouraging sign. If she had given orders for me to be kicked out it wouldn't be more than I deserve! What a brute I was yesterday! And last night I was a perfect fiend. She paid me back a little in my own coin, the way she went on with that Mr. Guthrie. Always in her own sweet little way, of course, but looking as if he were the only one in the world! I could have wrung his neck with great pleasure! She'd better look out or she'll find herself engaged to him for that picnic. Heigho! I wish she'd come! I feel as limp as an oyster, and as dumb as one too. (*Pauses before mirror, arranges tie, etc.*) I wonder if my lesson had a salutary effect. At any rate, if she is tired of "prunes and prisms" I'll wager that she liked the old Jack best! As for me, "Prudence in all things," say I! Didn't look much like it yesterday, I must confess; but there are two kinds of that interesting article. I like the one with the capital *P* best. (*Meditatively.*) "Prudence, prunes and prisms." I think she really does care for me a little, but how can I be sure? Why is it that girls have such a way of enveloping their hearts and their consciences, too, if they have any, in so many folds of cotton wool, that it is almost impossible to find them! I hope she hasn't told her mother! She always was so good to me, and that shot was really unpardonable. (PRUE'S voice heard, singing.) Hello! Brace up, old man! Now for it!

Enter PRUE, carrying roses, nonchalantly.

PRUE (*singing*). "One spring morning, bright and fair!" (*Seeing JACK. Carelessly.*) Good-morning!

JACK. I behaved like a brute yesterday, Prudence; but if you can find it in your heart to forgive me, will you take me by the hand and tell me so? (*Holding out his hand.*)

PRUE (*innocently*). Why, Mr. Wilton, what do you mean? I'll take your hand for "good-morning" if you like, but what have I to forgive? (*Taking his hand.*)

JACK (*taken aback*). Why, I rather thought—that is—oh,

you know I behaved like a perfect brute yesterday, and I fully expected to be refused admittance this morning, but I assure you my repentance is most sincere !

PRUE (*apart*). I should say he did ! But I'll not give him the satisfaction of saying so !

JACK. It was only an absurd notion I had of making a better impression on you (PRUE *astonished; laughs*); but I was clumsy at it I suppose. Somehow I had gotten the idea that formality rather palled on you, and that a little change from an old friend might be refreshing. (*Becoming confused.*)

PRUE (*pretending to understand*). It seems to me I *did* think your manner a little peculiar, but if I wondered at it at all, I probably thought it a natural retrogression. (*Carelessly.*) One can accomplish so much in a year, you know ! I suppose one's natural tendencies will crop out as one grows older ! (*Sits in easy chair.*)

JACK (*sits at table. Flatly*). I'm glad you're not offended. I was afraid I had erred past forgiveness.

PRUE (*apart*). So he has—almost ! (*Aloud.*) Oh, pray dismiss it from your mind ! What has come over you, Jack, to worry over such trifles ? (*Gaily.*) And how does it happen that you are not at business this morning ? Or if not there, why not with Miss Benton ? “ If not, why not ? ”

JACK. I see I have made a mistake all 'round with my absurd cross-purposes. Miss Benton is all very well, I suppose, but she is too accomplished a flirt for me ! I stayed over for the express purpose of seeing you. (PRUE *amused.*) Behold me ! figuratively speaking, at your feet, an abject slave, craving forgiveness !

PRUE (*laughing*). I'm glad you're not there literally ! I hate to see a man groveling around in absurd positions, spoiling the knees of his trousers !

JACK. You speak feelingly ; as though you had had ample experience in that line !

PRUE (*wickedly*). Well, not exactly that ! *He* could hardly be called *ample*, but a small experience ! (*Plays with roses.*)

JACK (*apart*). That's Guthrie, confound him ! (*Aloud.*) Oh, well, girls are always happier when they are a little cruel !

PRUE. Excuse me. That, I thought, has always been an attribute of the so-called “stronger sex.” A boy no sooner begins to think, than his brain devises plans for hurting some one or *something* ; whether it be a butterfly, crushed in his tiny

JACK'S BLUFF

gs of his small sister, as he grows older, on inevitable skirts and pigtails!

You speak advisedly when you mention butterflies in the same breath! Allow me to girls might be placed under the same head! As goes on, it strikes me, with more force, w—the butterfly coming out ahead every

forward, pretends to be puzzled). You z, Jack, possibly I am rather stupid, but trying that again? It seemed rather vague, to catch your meaning exactly.

over her chair). I mean then, that a girl of her dainty little hand the heart and life any men as may happen to please her fancy nt, and tosses them away like airy nothings pleasure to do so, as a butterfly flits about er, sipping all that is best in their lives, to ! *(Crosses L.)*

laughs gaily. Rises and follows him). I quite sure you are feeling well? Really I you! Would you prefer a mustard plaster an ice-cold bandage for your head? *That, st to relieve the pressure of the brain which ruggling under! (Laughing.)*

oodily). Oh, you may laugh if you please, vertheless! Cruelty to dumb animals in a oy may be reprehensible, I admit, but the the human heart by thoughtless girls is ver dies! *(Retires up stage, c.)*

o). And are men never cruel in the way v about the—*(beginning to count on fingers)* eyes of varied hues which have smiled at and in vain this past year? Oh, Jack, how

ten aback). Oh, well, little affairs of that kin deep, they do no harm!

Ah! You do not know! How many ay have to answer for, who can tell? It is affair, I think, from the standpoint of your

ill. *(Apart.)* I suppose she's waiting for ot going to give Guthrie a chance till noon-

time anyway. (*Saunters to table, takes up photo-book. Aloud.*) Any new snapshots lately?

PRUE. Oh, yes, lots! I've had such interesting subjects this last year.

JACK. More so than the old ones, I suppose!

PRUE. That's my old book; there are no new ones in that. Here is my new one. (*Showing it.*)

JACK. I don't want to see the new one. (*Takes old book and sits on sofa L.*) Come and show me the old one, will you?

PRUE (*hesitates, then sits at his left on sofa. They turn leaves*). This is ancient history, you see. Here's the one mama took of us up in the old apple-tree.

JACK. Why, so it is! What funny looking kids we were! Oh, that was the day *I* fell out of the tree and *you* cried, do you remember, Prue? (*Sentimentally.*)

PRUE (*carelessly*). I can't say that I do, but my memory is quite poor lately; really I'm worried about it! (*Anxiously.*)

JACK. Perhaps you remember more distinctly the number of green apples you ate. I'm sure I do!

PRUE. What an inconvenient memory you have! You were always good at figures. Do you remember the one I took of you in your first long suit? (*Becoming interested.*) Oh, Jack! What a dude you were that day, and how immeasurably superior to small girls in short skirts! (*Laughing.*)

JACK (*laughing, becoming excited*). Ah, yes, but wait a minute! Where's the one I took of you the first day you put your hair up? That's the superior one if you like. (*Turns leaves rapidly.*) Here it is! Long lanky youths were decidedly inferior that day—and ever after!

PRUE (*turning leaves*). And here we are in all shapes and sizes. We always intended to expend our energies on landscapes, but somehow when the films were developed, *we* always popped out serenely. I always liked taking people best.

JACK. Yes, and when you take them you keep them, that's the trouble! But, Prue, there's one scene you haven't put in your book, and I carry the memory of it with me always. I told you then that I never could forget it, and I never shall! Is there any chance of your remembering it among these dear old scenes? I have not changed, Prue!

PRUE (*closes book suddenly; rises*). As I said before, your memory is too inconvenient. *I* only remember pleasant things. (*Apart.*) I must not give in yet; he doesn't deserve it.

some way, you know; and after the way you carried on last night, she certainly will expect *at least* a week's engagement! But, for the picnic—you belong to me! And ——

JACK (*kneeling in chair and facing her*). And for always, Prue?

PRUE (*shyly*). And for always, Jack!

JACK (*lapsing into the old childish talk*). Truly, Prue? Cross your heart?

PRUE. Truly, Jack! Wish I may die if I don't! (JACK *tries to take her face between his hands to kiss her, she ducks her head down on back of chair.*)

CURTAIN

Miss Jones, Journalist

Or, For the Special Edition

A Farcical Sketch in One Act

By J. BUTLER HAVILAND

Author of "Mrs. Maltby's Mole," "The Ashes of Love," etc.

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Miss Jones, Journalist

SCENE.—*A rocky pass in 4. Set rocks and ground row, with runs. Set house R. from I, obliqued, with piazza and porch. Sign on house,—“The Rest for the Weary Hotel. Travelers taken in and done for.” Telegraph wire running from roof of porch, across and off L. Old well L. Green baize down. Grass mats, etc. Rustic table and seats. General set for summer hotel in the mountains. As the time is early morning, the lights are half-down at the rise, with green or blue calcium from front to flood stage, and red and yellow from R. and L. upper entrances. Lights gradually up, to represent sunrise. Bunch light for inside of house. Ground rows back of rocks.*

(As the curtain rises, Tom heard off.)

TOM. All right, all right! Get there and back as quick as you can, and now good-bye and good-luck to you! (*Entering backwards down run.*) Well, Tommie, my boy, I think you've done it! Ha, ha, ha! Won't Louise be furious when she arrives here and learns that I left the train at the Junction, cut across country on a hired pony, and have already taken steps to secure the information we have both travelled all the way from New York to obtain. How fortunate for me that I saw her before she saw me, and I think that when she finds she has failed in getting this “scoop” for the “Morning Blower” she will be ready and willing to give up journalism, and return to the arms of her awful, I mean lawful—husband. I'm sure that when the managing editor of the “Blower” wakes up tomorrow, and reads the glaring head-lines of our early edition, he will curse the “Morning Gas Bag” and all its staff. Moreover, he will be almost sure to ask for Louise's resignation when he learns that he owes his defeat to me, for he will jump to the conclusion that we fixed it up between us, knowing that

Louise is Mrs. Fairchild, although she has elected to leave me, and, under the euphonious cognomen of "Miss Jones," endeavors to earn her living as a "lady reporter." And all for what? To uphold her principles as a new woman. We were both sent here by our respective editors to obtain an important statement from a multi-millionaire,—Vandergould by name,—who has buried himself in these mountains for the summer. It means a tremendous scoop for the newspaper that secures his signed statement on the matter in question, and thousands of investors all over the country are eagerly waiting for news. I learned from the landlord on my arrival that I could only reach Vandergould's by boat, as the bridge over the What's-its-name River had blown down, so I immediately dispatched him with a letter, requesting his signed ultimatum, enclosed my credentials, and must now think of some plan to detain "Miss Jones" here till he returns. What can I do? She will never consent to,— (*Looks off R. U. E.*) Hello! who's that chap with the gun? He's pointing it this way! Hey there! Put that down! What! Well, if it isn't my old pal Larkins, the comedian. On his vacation I—— By Jove, a splendid idea! I'll get him to rig me up as the landlord, fool Louise, keep her here till my copy is on the way to New York—and get my "scoop." Hey, Larky, old boy!—wait a bit——

[*Ad lib., exit R.*

(*During the latter part of foregoing speech, horses' hoofs are heard, gradually approaching, and as soon as he exits, music starts pianissimo. Voices heard out, "Whoa! Back—shh! Whoa! Steady now, miss." Jump.*)

LOUISE (*out*). Oh, thank you so much! But for you I never should have reached here, I'm sure. Thank you! Good-bye! (*Laughing and talking ad lib., as she enters, R. U. E.*) Well, at last I've reached a human habitation! I do hope I can get breakfast here; I'm ravenously hungry! (*Sees sign; reads.*) "Rest for the Weary." (*Laughs.*) What an odd name for a hotel, and yet so appropriate. Don't see any one about. (*Bangs table with her umbrella.*) Hello, inside there! Landlord! Somebody!! Anybody!!! (*Pause.*) Not a sound. I wonder where the people are who—— (*Up at back, looking over cliff.*) Well! If there isn't the railway just below! And yet the road winds way round the mountain for ever so far. I wonder if Tom has arrived yet? Gracious!

Wouldn't he be just wild if he knew that I had recognized him on the train, and had come here on the same errand as himself! And I'll beat him at his own game too! I'll win out! I must! I shall! If only to show him that I am quite as clever as he is, and just as well able to earn my own living. (*Walks about impatiently.*) Well, I wish I could connect with a cup of coffee. Landlord! (*Enter TOM as landlord, in shirt sleeves, white apron, wig and whiskers.*) Oh, there you are —

TOM. Yep! Was you un'a-callin'?

LOU. Me? Calling? Oh no,—I only whispered. Tell me, please,—how far is Mr. Vandergould's house from here?

TOM. 'Bout three miles.

LOU. Three miles! Heavens! I never can walk that far! Have you a horse?

TOM. Yep!

LOU. Well, can I get you to harness up at once and drive me over? I must see Mr. Vandergould at the earliest possible moment. Please hurry!

TOM. Nope!

LOU. Do you mean you won't?

TOM. Nope!

LOU. What *do* you mean?

TOM. Can't!

LOU. Oh, don't say that. Why can't you do as I ask?

TOM. Hoss can't go!

LOU. The horse can't go? Why? Is he sick? What do you mean?

TOM. Thar's the hoss! (*Points to saw-horse standing near wood pile, L.*)

LOU. (*stamping her foot angrily*). Oh! What a surly brute! And how dare he attempt to joke with me? Oh, very well, I must walk it, that's all.

TOM. Better not!

LOU. And why, pray?

TOM. 'Cos thar's a river ter git over, an' the bridge is down. You city gals kin do lots, but onless ye kin walk on th' water, er swim nigh on a mile, ye'd better change yer mind.

LOU. (*very angrily*). What an aggravating monster this landlord is.

TOM. I suppose you're one o' them new women. I reckon you'd like to be a man, wouldn't ye?

LOU. Yes. Wouldn't you? Do you mean to say that I can't get to Mr. Vandergould's at all?

TOM. Wall, ye mought be able ter, if ye wait till the boat comes back.

LOU. The boat? What boat?

TOM. My boat. Thar's a young feller frum Noo York a-usin' on it now. Gone ter see the same man. He was in a hel—helthy kind ov a hurry too. Guess you all must be on the same lay. What is it? Old Van hain't started takin' in boarders, has he?

LOU. I'll bet it's Tom! (*To him.*) What sort of a looking gentleman is he you speak of?

TOM. Oh, he warn't much ter look at. Kinder betwixt an' between.

LOU. Listen. Was he dressed in a light suit, with a straw hat, and—and was he very tall?—and very slim?

TOM. Wall, he was long and lanky, if that's what ye mean. When I seen him a-comin' up the mountain, I sez ter Marthy, "Gee! Here comes a feller what's skinnier nor I am!"

LOU. (*laughs*). That's Tom! And he's got there by this time, I suppose. Well, I may as well make the best of it. Landlord, please get my things from the station, will you, as soon as possible, and I will wait over here for breakfast, and take the eight-thirty down express to New York.

TOM. All right, miss,—I'll fetch 'em. (*She exits into house.*) She never tumbled! Hooray! Won't I give her the laugh! Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit, L. U. E.*]

LOU. (*in house; seen through the window*). Oh, landlord,—wait a moment! (*Reenters.*) Why, he's gone, and I forgot to ask him to show me my room. Never mind, I won't let that worry me if I can only think of some way to outwit Mr. Tom. (*Sees telephone sign on house; reads.*) "Public Telephone." The very thing! I'll 'phone him! (*Goes into house.*) Where's the 'phone, I wonder? Oh, here we are. Now what's his number? (*Reads down the list.*) Van,—Van—Vandergould,—4-11-44. Good! (*Bus. of ringing him up, ad lib., then.*) Is this Mr. Vandergould? Yes? Well, I am a New York reporter, and I've been sent here on that Sugar Trust matter. We want your signed statement for publication if you—what's that? Here,—wait a minute, please. Don't ring off. Hello! Hello! (*Rings.*) Hello! He's cut me off! But what can he mean? He said he had just sent a letter with his statement to me by the landlord of this

hotel. And I have just sent the landlord to the station for my things! What is he talking about? There can't be two landlords! Oh-h-h-h! I see! My landlord isn't the real thing! He—he's a fake! He—he's Tom! Why, yes, there's his coat hanging on a nail in the hall. This is another trick of his that I must trump! But how? I have it! I'll waylay the real landlord, get the letter from him, make a copy of it, and get mine off before he can send his! But I must be careful—here he comes.

TOM (*enters L. U. E., carrying heavy grips, etc.*). Whew! I hadn't bargained for this, but I suppose it's all part of the game. (*To her.*) Here ye are, miss! Here's a few of 'em. I left the other 'steen down ter the depot till the stage comes up.

LOU. Thank you. I'm going for a little stroll to get up an appetite for breakfast. I'll be back very soon. Please have my luggage taken to my room. [*Exit, L. U. E.*]

TOM (*drops the grip suddenly*). Now what's she up to? She's got wind of something, I'll bet! She always was a "sly puss." I'll have to watch myself, or she'll be getting the best of me on this deal, and that would be my finish. (*Looks at watch.*) It's about time that yap got back with my letter. I wonder if he got there all right? I've a great mind to telephone up and inquire. Yes,—it's getting late. I'll do it.

(*He enters house, goes to 'phone, looks up number.*)

LOU. (*enters L. U. E., with letter, goes to table, sits*). Eureka! I've got it! I've got it. And now—I wonder if I'm doing quite right in opening this letter? Why, of course. Any wife has the privilege of reading her husband's correspondence! Here goes!

(*She opens the letter, reads it quickly, copies it, and encloses the copy in another envelope. Puts the original in her pocket. During this business, he is at the telephone, calling up Vandergould. Bus. ad lib., as before; finally.*)

TOM. Is this Mr. Vandergould? Yes? Well I'm the New York reporter. Did you receive my note? What? How many times am I going to ask? I haven't 'phoned you before. I've just—what? Ring off? Here, wait a bit! Hello! Hello! Well,—what do you think of that? He says this is the second time I've rung him up to ask that question and wants to know if I'm crazy, or only just foolish! What's

the matter with the old idiot? Oh! I'm on! "Miss Jones" has been doing a little telephoning on her own account, and by this time will have intercepted my letter, I'll bet a dollar. (*Catches sight of her at table writing.*) Yes. She's there copying the whole thing. Well, this is a slap on the wrist! There's only one thing to be done. I must feign complete ignorance, and endeavor to get my copy away to town, and prevent the dispatching of hers. I'll make a bluff at it.

(*Enters from house. She rises, and comes towards him with a smile.*)

LOU. Ah-h-h! There you are, landlord. By the way,—have you a Mr.— (*looks at envelope*) Mr. Fairchild staying here?

TOM (*aside*). Well, of all the nervy — (*To her.*) Yep. He's the feller wot went up to old Van's.

LOU. Indeed. Well, here is a letter for him which was handed me by a man I met down the road. He said he belonged here, and on learning that I was returning to the house, entrusted me with the delivery of the letter while he went to the station for the rest of my traps. Wasn't he kind?

(*Laughs slyly, and enters the house, remaining to listen at the window, unseen by him.*)

TOM (*holding letter in his hand, and gazing blankly after her*). Well, wouldn't that agitate your risibles? I'm something of a prevaricator myself, but—I throw up my hands! (*She laughs softly.*) Well, the best thing for me to do is to get to the telegraph office at the station as quickly as possible, before she finds out I'm not the landlord, for if he should return now, the game is up. Yes, that's it. I'll run to the station, and wire the whole story to New York, and then,—it's good-bye to "Miss Jones, Journalist." [*Exit, L. U. E.*]

LOU. (*coming out of house; looking after him*). In—deed? Well, not while Miss Jones knows it! What can I do to circumvent this last plan of his? I must not fail, after having beaten him with his own weapon! How can I possibly prevent his sending that wire? (*Sees telegraph wire.*) Ah! I have it! That's the only wire running over the mountain, and if I can cut that, all communication will be stopped. (*Gets hatchet from wood pile, and climbs up to cut the wire.*) It's a risky thing to do. I'm running up against the Western Union, but the New York "Morning Blower" must get its special, and

MISS JONES, JOURNALI

the "Gas Bag" must be punctured. So
wire, which falls to the ground.) Now
Landlord & Co., we'll see who wins. I
to get my letter aboard the fast freight
8:10, I'm all right. But how to do it?
or he'll suspect. (*Looks off R.*) More
thing on two legs coming down the moun
take it for me. Here you,—you! Come
munching an apple.) Can you go to the
Boy (*nods his head*). Uh-huh!

Lou. Well, here, take this note to the
can, and I'll give you a dollar. Wait the
comes in at 8:10 and give it to the cor
post it in New York. Do you understand

Boy. Uh-huh!

Lou. Heavens! Can't you say
huh"?

Boy. Uh-huh!

Lou. Well, what can you say?

Boy (*grins*). Uh-huh!

Lou. Dear me, what a character!
dollar,—now run. Run! (Boy *grins*,
looking round at her.) Is that as fast as

Boy. Uh-huh! [*Gr*

Lou. Well, if that specimen of backw
only manage to reach the station witho
something beside "Uh-huh" when he ge
a raise of salary, and Tom is beaten.
(Tom *enters very crestfallen.*) Why, wh
lord? You look unhappy.

Tom (*angrily*). Oh, landlord be ha
landlord, and you jolly well know it!

Lou. (*in mock surprise*). What? N

Tom. Oh, chuck it, Lou, you're on
know it. Well, we're both in the same fi
to wire my copy, my copy!—recollect,
was down. (*Sees wire.*) Why, here's th
amines the wire.) And it's been cut!
of trouble for somebody, when they find

Lou. I am to blame.

Tom. You? You cut the Western U

Lou. (*picks up hatchet*). Yes. I ca
it with my little hatchet!

TOM (*aside*). That's my wife! There's journalism for you! Hang it, I'm proud of her, even if I am the sufferer. (*To her.*) See here, Louise, I was next to you from the very start. Now, I got the story from old money-bags up yonder, and I ought to get the credit for it. But I won't be mean. Come down to the Junction with me, and we'll send the whole thing to both our chiefs. It'll spoil our special edition, but then, it's the only thing to do. Say you will. (*She shakes her head with a quiet smile.*) Ah do. And Lou,—aren't you getting a little tired of journalism? For my part, I'm very lonely, and so tired of cooking my own breakfasts. I've eaten so many eggs of late, that I'm positively ashamed to look a hen in the face. Why not start our honeymoon over again, and begin afresh? Eh,—what do you say? Shall we go to the Junction together?

LOU. It would be quite useless, Tom.

TOM. Useless? Why?

LOU. Because my copy has already gone!

TOM (*train heard in the distance, gradually getting nearer, passing, and dying away, through following speeches*). Gone!

LOU. (*up stage*). Yes,—listen! There's the train that carries my letter to New York. The "Blower" gets its "special" after all. (*To him.*) Ah, but Tom, I'm so sorry! I am really.

TOM. A lot of good that does me. I can see myself looking for a new berth, after this wipe out,—and by my own wife, too.

LOU. Why, Tom,—they'll never be so cruel!

TOM. Won't they though! (*Catches sight of face of envelope which he has been holding absently, in his hand.*) Great Scott! I'm saved! The "Gas Bag" is "it" after all.

LOU. What are you talking about?

TOM. See here, Louise,—in your haste, you gave me your envelope, keeping mine. See,—this is addressed, "To the City Editor, 'Morning Blower,' New York," while mine, addressed to the "old man" at the "Gas Bag" Office, is on its way to town. Hurrah! Oh,—I forgot. My success means your downfall. Never mind, dear, why not chuck the newspaper work,—it's a poor game for a woman at best,—and come back to the little home, eh?

LOU. Well, Tom, if you're quite sure you want me?

TOM. Need you ask?

LOU. Very well then —— (*Throws note-book over the cliff.*) There goes my note-book ! All that is left of " Miss Jones, Journalist " !

TOM. We will breakfast, and then go down to the Junction together, where I will wire the news of our reconciliation to the " old man,"—which will make another interesting item

"FOR THE SPECIAL EDITION." (*Embrace.*)

CURTAIN

MOR'D ALICE

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Act

By

MARION ROGER FAWCETT.

Author of "The Alarm," etc.

NOTE

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MOR'D ALICE

CHARACTERS

FRANK GRESHAM, *an artist.*

EVA ROSS, *his model.*

MOR'D ALICE, *a servant.*

SCENE.—A room in a Bloomsbury lodging-house.

PERIOD.—The present day.

Time, twelve to fifteen minutes.

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Mor'd Alice

SCENE.—*Untidy room; doors R. and L. Practicable sash window, C. Artist's easel R. of window. Plaster casts and unframed canvasses on walls and floor. Bed half concealed by shabby screen up stage R. Large packing-case and sofa down stage, L. Small table, tray and dishes; kipper on same; down stage, R., two common chairs. Small table near window with geranium plant on it. Stool, box of colors, etc., in front of easel.*

(As curtain rises, a shrill call of "Mor'd Alice" is heard off L. Music starts on street organ—tune—"There was I a-waiting at the church." GRESHAM is discovered sitting in front of easel, his head buried in hands. Voice off repeats, "Mor'd Alice—ye lazy little brat, where are ye?" GRES. takes up brushes and starts working. Music changes to "Yip-i-addy.")

GRES. *(angrily throwing down brushes, going to window, which is open, and calling out).* Damn you! Stop that infernal row. Stop it, or I'll call the police.

VOICE *(off, in shrill yell).* Mor'd Alice!

(Music played louder.)

GRES. Damn the damned row! A genius couldn't do a stroke of work with this going on.

VOICE *(off).* Mor'd Alice-e-e-e!

GRES. Oh, damn Maud' Alice!

MOR'D ALICE *(entering L.).* Yessir—did ye call, sir?

(She is an unkempt-looking girl about fourteen, dressed in dirty cotton frock and apron several inches longer than dress in front. Hair in curl papers, down-at-heel shoes, cap askew on head. Red flannel petticoat showing beneath dress. Smudgy face. Carries tin bucket, brush and dust-pan in hands.)

MOR'D ALICE

GRES. Call! No, *I* didn't, but every one else in the house seems to be doing so. Why can't you answer and have done with it?

VOICE (*off*). Mor'd Alice!

M. A. Comin', mam—comin'.

GRES. (*angrily*). You're always saying "coming," yet you never go. If that woman yells like that again, I'll give notice. I won't stand the infernal row of this house any longer. I'll give — (*Organ off starts cake walk. M. A. keeps time to the music with eccentric steps. Her shoe flies off. GRES. watches her in amazement.*) What the devil!

(*Music stops. She stops suddenly, dropping bucket and brushes with loud clatter.*)

M. A. I begs yer pardon, sir. Can I clear yer slops? (*GRES. shrugs shoulders impatiently and sits before easel.*) I didn't mean to offend yer, sir—strite I didn't—but bein' my 'arf day off I gets sort of frisky-like. Can I clear yer slops, sir?

(*Picks up bucket.*)

GRES. Yes, yes, my good girl, and be quick about it.

VOICE (*off*). Mor'd Alice!

GRES. Oh, damn! (*He kicks the bucket savagely.*)

M. A. You've dinged it, sir.

GRES. Dinged it—I hope I've smashed it.

M. A. I shouldn't mind the missus yellin' like that if I was you, sir. It's good fer 'er. Sort of them deep-breathin' exercises. Have ye got an nedache, sir?

GRES. Yes, Maud Alice, a headache, and a heartache, and every kind of ache.

M. A. An' no wonder, either. Why, ye ain't eat yer kipper.

(*Picks up kipper from tray.*)

GRES. I don't want any breakfast. You can clear away.

M. A. (*smelling kipper*). Was it a bit frisky, sir? Ye can't depend on them two fer three hapence kind.

(*Eats kipper by tearing it with her teeth. Takes teapot; waters plant from same.*)

GRES. Are there any letters for me?

M. A. No, sir—leastways, not as I seed. Shall I go and ask missus, sir?

GRES. No, it doesn't matter.

M. A. (*picking up cast of foot*). Beg pardon, sir, but wouldn't this 'ere be better fer a wash?

GRES. Put that down. It won't wash.

M. A. Won't wash! My! Fancy 'aving feet that won't wash. (*Points to nude cast of woman's head.*) Don't she wash, sir?

GRES. No.

M. A. (*slapping bust*). Dirty cat! Can I clear yer slops, sir?

GRES. My good girl, haven't I told you to clear them, and be quick about it?

VOICE (*off*). Mor'd Alice!

M. A. Comin', mam—comin'. (*Goes lazily to bed and commences to make it. Organ off plays waltz. She waltzes round room, pillow in arms. Stops hurriedly as GRES. looks at her.*) I begs yer pardon, sir—I really do. You see, I allus gets like this on me day off. Have ye got the hump, sir?

GRES. Have I got the what?

M. A. The hump—the bloomin' pip, sir—same as is in oranges. You looks reg'lar down-hearted. Can't I do nothin' for ye, sir?

GRES. You're a good girl, Maud Alice. Don't bother about me. I'll be all right presently. Only, you see, I'm beastly hard up, and I can't get on with my painting—that's all. You haven't seen Miss Ross to-day, have you?

M. A. Yer model, sir? No, I haven't—and beggin' yer pardon, sir, I wish ye wouldn't paint 'er. She's a reg'lar bad lot, she is.

GRES. She has a face worth painting, though, Maud Alice.

M. A. Oh, her dial's all right of a sort, but she's a rotter. I wish I could help ye, sir—I feels that 'appy ter-day meself.

GRES. Happy because it's your half day off? Poor little beggar! I suppose you're going to meet your sweetheart. Who is he? The milkman?

M. A. What, old milk, oh? Not much, sir.

GRES. Who then? Not that disreputable-looking cat's-meat man?

M. A. Bless yer 'eart, sir, I ain't got no sweetheart. I don't want no boys hanging round after me. I enjoys meself on me 'arf days off without them. I puts on me best togs, and I paints the town pink, I does. I'm going to Madame Too-soos to-day.

GRES. To where?

M. A. Too-soos—yer know, sir, the waxworks. Ain't ye ever been there, sir? Oh, it's lovely!—there's the king and queen and all the big pots—and—and ain't ye ever seen the chamber of 'orrors, sir?

GRES. No, I can't say I have.

M. A. My, sir! Ye've missed a fair treat—strite ye 'ave. Why, I knows all the murderers and poisoners by 'eart. There's Charlie Peace and Dr. Crippen—and—oh, Mr. Gresham, sir—why don't ye go yerself? It'll cure yer pip. (GRES. *shakes his head and smiles. She hesitates a second, then lifts skirt and takes purse out of flannel petticoat, opens, takes out coin, spits on it.*) I—I begs yer pardon, sir, but would ye let me treat ye?

GRES. Treat me?

M. A. To Madame Too-soos, sir. Ye said ye was 'ard up. Well, I've got a 'arf crown 'ere as I've bin saving up. If ye walked a bit of the way, ye could do the bloomin' lot in fer two bob, catalogue an' all.

GRES. My dear little girl ——!

M. A. Take it, sir—take it, to please me. I hates ter see ye down-hearted.

GRES. But your half day, child ——

M. A. Oh, rats—I can 'ave that another day, sir.

VOICE (*off*). Mor'd Alice!

M. A. 'Ere ye are, sir—take it. (*Pushes purse into his hand; makes as if to exit quickly.*) Comin', mam—comin'.

GRES. Maud Alice!

M. A. Yessir!

GRES. Come here!

(*She comes to him slowly. He takes her hand and puts purse in it, closing fingers over it.*)

M. A. Then you won't 'ave it, sir?

GRES. No, I won't have it—God bless you, little girl.

(*Takes her face between his hands; kisses her forehead.*)

M. A. You're offended, sir?

GRES. Offended! I'm so offended that I'm going to take your advice. I'm going to Madame Tussaud's, and, what's more, I'm going to take you there.

M. A. What, sir!

GRES. We'll paint the town pink, Maud Alice—as pink as we can for—let's see. (*Takes money out of pocket.*) Seven and fourpence. We'll go to Madame Tussaud's—and we'll go there in a taxi.

M. A. Oh, Mr. Gresham, sir—you couldn't. You—go out with me—a grand gentleman like you.

GRES. Grand gentleman be hanged! Are you game, Maud Alice?

M. A. Game, sir? Oh—I—I——

GRES. Suppose you imagine that I'm your sweetheart for the day. You would let him take you out if you had one, wouldn't you?

M. A. Yessir, but——

GRES. Then that's settled. I am your sweetheart, am I not?

M. A. (*looking at him, all heart feeling in the look.*) Yes, sir. You are—my—sweetheart.

(*His back is to her as she speaks.*)

GRES. Then run and get your toggery on and let's go. I'm having a day off, too. I'm sending all the blue devils away, Maud Alice; I'll bury them in the Chamber of Horrors. We're just going to have a happy day.

(*Organ off plays tune, "Somewhere."*)

M. A. Yessir. Did ye say that because of the organ, sir?

GRES. The organ?

M. A. Yessir. Listen. Whenever the organ plays that tune I know I'm going to have a happy day. You're sure you really want to go, sir?

GRES. Of course I do. You'll point them all out to me, won't you? Charles Peace and——

M. A. And Mrs. Maybrick, sir—and the woman as kept the baby farm—and I'll wear me new hat, sir. It's got seven feathers—and me green stockings. Oh!—I'm that 'appy I could fair scream.

(*Bell rings off L.*)

GRES. There—there; run and get ready.

M. A. (*pulling off cap and apron kicks them aside on floor.*) Yessir, I'll be back in a jiffy, sir. I mean, I'll not be a minute, sir. I'll come back fer yer slops.

VOICE (*off*). Mor'd Alice!

M. A. Comin', mam—comin'.

(*Takes up tray and goes to exit L. ; meets EVA ROSS, entering. A tall, showy-looking girl, smartly dressed, carrying a letter.*)

EVA. Why can't you answer the door? I had to ring several times.

M. A. (*imitating her*). You don't say so. Some folks has trouble, 'asn't they?

EVA. You impertinent brat!

M. A. Now, then, come orf it. None of yer lip, or I'll sling the kipper in yer eye.

GRES. Run along and get ready, Maud Alice. I shan't want you to-day, Eva. I'm not going to do any work.

EVA. Sulky because I'm late, eh?

GRES. No, it's not that—but I've got the blues, and am taking a day off, like Maud Alice.

EVA. Like Maud Alice?

M. A. (*making mock curtsey*). Yes, like Mor'd Alice. That takes ye right orf, don't it?

(*Bursts out laughing, kicks open door and exits L.*)

EVA. I wonder you can stand that dirty little brat about you.

GRES. Oh, she's a good little soul. You don't know her.

EVA. I don't want to.

GRES. Her hard life hasn't degraded her; she has a heart of gold. What have you got there?

EVA. A letter for you. I found it in the hall, so I brought it up. (*Gives letter.*) Come out if you're not going to work, will you? It's a glorious day.

(*Goes to window, C. ; leans out.*)

GRES. (*reading letter*). Good God!

EVA (*coming down stage*). What's wrong?

GRES. Wrong!—Good heavens, read that! (*Gives letter.*) I—I can't believe it.

EVA (*reading aloud*). "Dear Sir:—We have much pleasure in informing you that by the will of your late uncle, Mr. James Gresham, you, as his sole legatee, are entitled to the sum of six thousand pounds a year ——"

GRES. Six thousand a year!

EVA. "If you will kindly call on us between the hours of ten and twelve ——"

GRES. Six thousand pounds a ——

EVA. I say, old boy, what luck!

GRES. Six thousand ——

EVA. It seems to have knocked you silly.

GRES. Six ——

EVA. Here, pull yourself together, Frank! I don't wonder you're dazed, though. It does take one's breath away. Lord! —what a time you can have. What will you do?

GRES. *Do?* Make up for all the rotten years of ill-paid work—of semi-starvation. *Do?* Paint the town pink, as Maud Alice says. *Do?* Anything—everything—eat—drink—go abroad—Rome—Paris ——

EVA. Paris!

GRES. Yes, Paris. I say, would you like to come too?

EVA. Do you want me to?

GRES. I wouldn't ask you if I didn't. There's a lot of spending in six thousand a year. Come and help me.

EVA. You really mean it?

GRES. I really mean it. I'll give you a good time. We'll enjoy ourselves, Eva—just you and I together.

EVA. You and I—together!

GRES. Will you come?

EVA. Yes.

(They embrace. M. A. enters quickly, L.; takes in situation.)

M. A. Here I am, sir. I'm ready.

(All the life dies out of her face. She is dressed in cheap, showy finery, all the colors clashing, elaborate feathered hat, etc.)

GRES. Ready! Eh—what's that? Oh, it's you, Maud Alice. Call a taxi, will you? There's a good girl. I'm leaving here at once. Tell Mrs. Mason to make up my bill. I've come into a lot of money, Maud Alice—wish me luck. *(Notices her clothes.)* Why! What a swell you are!

M. A. I put them on—to go to Madame Toosu-oos, sir.

GRES. God bless my soul—I forgot! Why, of course. Oh, I'm sorry, child. I'm afraid I won't be able to go with you now. But look here—take this and have a good time.

Mr. McArdle's Guest

A Farce in One Act

By D. S. MADDUX

Author of "The Man From Arizona"

Mr. McArdle's Guest

CHARACTERS

MR. MCARDLE, *of the "Brotherhood of Primitive Apostles."*

BROTHER JAMES SWAG, *a recent convert.*

MRS. BROWN, *housekeeper for McArdle.*

POLICEMAN.

TIME.—The present.

COSTUMES.—Modern.

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further ceremony we'll sit down to a little supper, and while eating you shall tell me all about the good work. Is Brother Tompkins well?

(They both sit at table.)

SWAG. Brother Tompkins is in excellent health, I thank you.

MR. M. And success attends his efforts?

SWAG *(eating rapidly and gesticulating with knife and fork)*. Success, brother! Success ain't no name for it.

MR. M. You are also a power for good, I am told.

SWAG. Some of it. Only the other day a jimmy and a dark lantern was sent me, with a letter saying the owner had no further use for 'em after hearing me preach at the mission.

MR. M. It is enough to make a man vain.

SWAG. So it is, but I struggle against it; I fight against it hard; but once lately I nearly felt uplifted.

MR. M. And how was that, Brother Swag?

SWAG. It was two policemen that come to the mission meeting. One I might have stood, but two come pretty near being too much for me. They sat under me while I gave it to 'em hot and strong. The feeling I had standing up there and telling policemen what they ought to do I'll never forget—not if I live to be a hundred years old.

MR. M. But why should preaching to policemen make you proud?

SWAG. Why, hasn't Brother Tompkins told you about me?

MR. M. *(shaking his head slowly)*. No—that is, he sort of—suggested that—that you had been a little bit wild before you joined the brotherhood of Primitive Apostles.

SWAG *(laying down knife and fork)*. A—little—bit—wild? ha! ha! ha! *Me* a little bit wild?

MR. M. No doubt he exaggerated a little. Being such a good man himself no doubt things that would seem very wicked to him wouldn't seem such unpardonable transgressions to us—to me, I mean.

SWAG. A little bit wild! Jimmy Swag the converted burglar a little bit wild, well! well!

MR. M. *(rising in alarm and clutching the edge of table with both hands)*. Converted what?

SWAG. Burglar. Why I think I know more about the inside of prisons than almost anybody of my age in the country.

MR. M. (*backing off from table and clasping his hands*). Horrible !

SWAG. I've pretty near killed three policemen ; besides breaking a gent's leg, and throwing a chambermaid out of a second story window ; and then Brother Tompkins goes and says I've been " a little bit wild." I wonder what he would have ?

MR. M. But you—you've quite reformed now ?

SWAG. I hope so, but it's an uncertain world, and far be it from me to boast. That's why I've come here.

MR. M. I—I don't quite understand you, brother.

SWAG (*rising and crossing to MR. M.*). Well, you see it's this way. Brother Tompkins and I was talking about temptation and fall, and he says to me, " Brother Swag, do you feel that you've been wholly redeemed and regenerated ? Do you believe you are strong enough to face temptation without relapsing into sin ? " " Tempt me," I says to him ; " put me in the way of temptation," I says. " Let me have a good old up and down tussle with Satan and see who wins." " I'll test you, brother," says he, patting me on the shoulder. (*Pats MR. M. on shoulder.*) " I'll send you on a week's mission down to Cloverport, and you shall stay with Brother McArdle, who keeps a jewelry store—a shop full of glittering vanities in gold and silver."

MR. M. Glittering vanities ?

SWAG. That's what he said—glittering vanities. Jewelry was always my weakness ; if I can stand that I can stand anything.

MR. M. But suppose the—the powers of darkness prevail, and you fall ?

SWAG (*sadly shaking his head*). We can only do our best.

MR. M. Perhaps, Brother Swag, it would not be quite fair and right to expose a recent convert to such temptation. Perhaps you had better sleep at a hotel.

SWAG. What, sleep at a hotel after Brother Tompkins has gone and took all this trouble ? I wouldn't think of doing such a thing.

MR. M. Brother Tompkins had no right to expose you to such a trial.

SWAG. I wonder what he'd say if he heard you ? To ask me to shun the fight like a coward ; to ask me to go and hide in a hotel with everything locked up, and nothing to steal.

MR. M. I should sleep far more comfortably if I knew you were not undergoing this tremendous strain. And besides, if

you did give way it would be a serious business for me ; that's what I want you to look at. I am afraid that, if—if unhappily you did fall, I couldn't prevent you.

SWAG. I'm sure you couldn't. That's the beauty of it ; that's where the evil one's whispers get louder and louder. Why, I could choke you between my thumb and finger ! (*Reaches for him. MR. M. draws back in alarm.*) If unfortunately our fallen nature should prove too strong for me, don't interfere, whatever you do. I might not be myself.

MR. M. Not even—call for—the—police ?

SWAG. That *would* be interfering. And now if you'll show me my room I'll go to bed.

MR. M. Certainly ; your room is already prepared. This way, Brother Swag. (*They cross to door, R. 1 E.*) I suppose Brother Tompkins felt pretty sure of you, else he wouldn't have sent you here ?

SWAG. Brother Tompkins said, "What is a jewelry store ? What is a few gewgaws when you come to consider the opportunity of such a trial, and the good it will do," and the drawing card it will be—if I *do* win—and testify to the congregation to that effect. Why there's sermons enough in it for a lifetime.

MR. M. So there is, so there is. You've got a good face, Brother Swag ; there's honesty written in every feature.

SWAG. I don't look enough like a burglar to suit some of 'em.

MR. M. Some people are hard to please, brother.

SWAG. That's what I say. Well, good-night, brother. [*Exit.*

MR. M. Good-night, Brother Swag. May pleasant dreams attend you. (*Crosses to c.*) Good heavens, what a position to be in ! It's no use of my going to bed ; I shouldn't be able to sleep a wink. Dear me, my nerves are all of a tremble ! (*Sits at table and rings call-bell.*)

Enter MRS. B., door L.

MRS. B. Did you ring, sir ?

MR. M. Yes, Mrs. Brown. If you will kindly remove these supper things, and bring in a little hot water and sugar I'll be obliged to you.

MRS. B. (*gathering up things on waiter*). Certainly, sir. Has Mr. Swag gone to bed ?

MR. M. Yes, Brother Swag has retired. By the way, Mrs. Brown, how does our guest impress you ?

MRS. B. Well, to be plain, he doesn't look much like a preacher to me.

MR. M. He is not a regular preacher, you know. He has only recently joined the brotherhood of Primitive Apostles, and until his conversion by the Rev. Josiah Tompkins, he led a very irregular life—in fact a most sinful life according to his own confession. But Brother Tompkins wrote me that he considered his conversion genuine.

MRS. B. (*starting off L. with waiter*). I do hope it is, sir, but these new converts so often turn out to be backsliders. You can never tell whether they're going to stick or slide, until temptation crosses their path. [*Exit.*

MR. M. Temptation! (*Rising.*) That's just what *he* said. "Tempt me," he says; "put me in the way of temptation." But if he should fail to stand the test? If the spirit of evil should overcome him what could I do? He is a man of violence, and if thwarted might do some desperate deed. It's terrible to think of. (*Wipes brow with handkerchief and sits down.*)

Reenter MRS. B. with hot water and sugar.

MRS. B. Anything more, sir?

MR. M. Thank you, Mrs. Brown, nothing more, I shall do very well now.

MRS. B. (*going*). Good-night, sir.

MR. M. Good-night, Mrs. Brown. (*Exit MRS. B.*) Now for a glass of toddy to steady my nerves. (*Goes to sideboard and gets bottle; returns to his chair and mixes drink.*) I shall put in an extra drop to-night. This shock to my nervous system will quite justify it, I am sure. (*Drinks.*) Ah, this will make me feel better! (*A loud groan is heard off R.*) What's that? (*Starting. Another groan is heard.*) Dear me! (*Voice off, "I tell you I won't. They ain't mine."*) Good heavens! it's Brother Swag! (*Goes to door R. and listens. Voice off: "Stop it, I tell you! No, I won't go and look at 'em."*) Mercy on us, I believe the evil one is tempting him! (*Voice off: "Get thee behind me, Satan; you know diamonds is my weakness."* A rattling of the door-knob, and MR. M. backs to C. in alarm.) Heaven help me!

Enter SWAG, fully dressed.

SWAG. What, you here?

MR. M. I—I thought you were ill, brother.

SWAG. Don't tell me none of your lies. You're watching me—that's what you're doing—spying on me. Tell the truth now, wasn't you spying?

MR. M. Well, I thought—that is—I was afraid you were being tempted.

SWAG. So I was, but that's my business. I don't want your assistance; I can fight my own battle with Satan. Now you go to bed. I'm going to tell Brother Tompkins I won this fight single-handed.

MR. M. So you are, brother, and it's doing me good to see it. It's a lesson to me, a lesson to all of us.

SWAG. I thought you was asleep. You get back to bed now; the fight ain't half over yet. (*Pushes door R. partly open as if to go in.*) Get back to bed now, and keep quiet.

MR. M. Yes, I will, brother.

SWAG. Well then let me see you go.

MR. M. Yes, I—I'm going, brother. (*Goes up to door in flat, R. C.*) Good-night, brother. [*Exit.*]

SWAG. Good-night. No more spying, now. (*Crosses to c.*) Ha! ha! ha! Well, this converted burglar racket is simply great. I've got his job-lots scared out of his boots. What's this, a bottle? (*Takes up bottle and smells.*) Spirits! Just what I need after such an exhaustive tussle with the devil. (*Pours out glassful and drinks.*) My what a sensation I'll create when I get back to Harlem, and give in my testimony before the assembled brotherhood. How I was tempted by Satan, and how after an awful struggle lasting nearly all night, I put the enemy to flight, hoof and horns. Ha! Ha! There won't be anything too good for Brother James Swag—he will live in clover. And the sisters! Bless their dear hearts, they'll just fall on his neck and weep for joy. I'll just drink their health. (*Drinks.*) Now I'll get out of sight till Brother Mac comes back, which won't be long, I'm thinking. He's too scared to ever go to bed *this* night. [*Exit door R.*]

Enter MR. M., cautiously, door in flat.

MR. M. All is quiet. I trust he has gone to sleep. (*Goes to door R. and listens.*) I hear nothing. I hope the spirits of evil will not again disturb his slumbers. But I am fearful—very fearful. (*Crosses to table c., and pours out drink.*) I am sure the occasion will justify my taking a little more of this excellent stimulant. (*Drinks.* SWAG opens door and looks out for an instant, then closes door.) He says he has come to

stay a week! No, no, not here—some other arrangement must be made—I never could stand the strain of another night like this. But how shall I get rid of him? That's the question! (*Groan heard off R.*) He's at it again! (*Voice off: "I don't want to do it. What's the good of only looking at 'em? If I look at 'em I'm gone."*) Merciful heavens! What shall I do if the devil proves too strong for him this time? Self-preservation, they say, is the first law of nature. If it comes to the worst I'll defend myself. But I have no weapon. Ah, the poker! (*Goes to fire and gets poker. Crosses to C.*)

Enter SWAG.

SWAG. What, you here again? After all I told you! No noise—one cry and I'll—— What was you going to do with that poker?

MR. M. (*backing up stage*). I—I—— Burglars—downstairs!

SWAG. What?

MR. M. I heard them in the store, that's why I took up the poker. Sh! (*Listening at door in flat.*) Can't you hear them?

SWAG (*advancing a step and listening*). I—I—hear a noise.

MR. M. I heard them talking a moment ago. Let's go down and call the police!

SWAG (*agitated*). No! no! don't go down, call 'em from the window. Burglars is ugly customers when they're disturbed. They might have pistols or something.

MR. M. (*listening intently*). Here they come!

SWAG. Good Lord! [*Rapid exit, slams door after him.*]

MR. M. (*comes to C.*). He's gone! My little ruse worked beautifully. He's frightened—he'll not come out again tonight. Oh, beautiful! beautiful! (*Voice off: "Police! Police!"*) Good heavens! He's calling the police from the window. The whole neighborhood will be aroused! The police will come—how shall I explain it? (*Voice off: "Police! Police!"*)

Enter MRS. B., L., in dressing-gown, carrying lighted candle.

MRS. B. Mercy on us! What is it, Mr. McArdle? Who is calling police?

MR. M. It's Brother Swag. He thought he—that is—he imagined he thought—he heard burglars!

MRS. B. Burglars in the house? (*Screams.*) Oh, we shall all be murdered! Save me, Mr. McArdle! (*Rushes to MR. M. and seizes him.*)

MR. M. Be calm, Mrs. Brown; there is no danger. It's all a mistake.

(*Loud rapping at back. Voice: "Open the door here."*)

MRS. B. (*screams*). They're coming!

MR. M. Be quiet, it's only the police. I must let them in. (*Hastens to door, back, and ushers in a POLICEMAN. Both stand C. MRS. B. stands L. C.*)

POLICEMAN. What's the trouble here?

MRS. B. The house is full of burglars, and they tried to murder us all. Oh, dear me!

POLICEMAN. Where are they? (*Flourishes club.*)

MR. M. Compose yourself, Mrs. Brown, and let me explain to the officer. (*To POLICEMAN*). You see I—I heard a noise—that is, I thought I heard a—or rather I—er——

POLICEMAN. Speak out, man! You thought you heard what?

(*SWAG opens door R. and looks out unseen.*)

MRS. B. Burglars! Oh, why don't you catch them?

POLICEMAN (*seeing SWAG looking out at door*). There's one of 'em now! (*Rushes to door, seizes SWAG by collar, and pulls him into room.*) Come along now—no monkey business! (*Flourishes club as SWAG pulls back.*)

SWAG. Let me go—it's all a mistake. Tell him it's a mistake, brother.

MR. M. Yes, it's all a mistake, officer, he's a friend of mine.

POLICEMAN. Friend of yours, is he?

MR. M. (*nodding*). Yes, that's Mr. James Swag, the converted burglar.

POLICEMAN. Conver—converted burglar? Here!

MR. M. He's a preacher now.

POLICEMAN. Preacher? Tommyrot! Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face. He had confederates on the outside; it was his part to go down and let 'em in. It's the old game; you can't fool the police.

SWAG. I hope you'll be forgiven for them words.

POLICEMAN. Come along with me now. (*Pulling SWAG to door at back.*)

SWAG. Oh, Brother McArdle, don't let him take me!

MR. M. (*going up*). Really, officer, you—you mistake. Let me explain—just a moment now.

POLICEMAN. You'll have to do your explaining in the police court in the morning. It's my duty to arrest and lock up all suspicious and dangerous characters.

SWAG. O! Mr. McArdle, if you'll only get me out of this mess I'll confess all.

MR. M. Confess! Confess what, sir?

SWAG. Why, it's all a lie. I ain't no—no converted burglar.

POLICEMAN. There! What did I tell you? You can't fool the police.

MR. M. What! You never have been a burglar?

SWAG. No, the burglar story is all a fake.

MR. M. (*clasping his hands and looking front*). What base deception! (*To SWAG, severely.*) And what of those three policemen you said you nearly killed?

SWAG. Never seen 'em; I wouldn't kill a fly.

MR. M. And you never broke a gentleman's leg?

SWAG. Never! So help me.

MR. M. Nor threw a chambermaid out of the window?

SWAG. All lies, brother.

MR. M. Don't call *me* brother. (*Clasps hands and looks front.*) O! How the brotherhood have been imposed upon! (*To SWAG.*) And do you mean to tell me also that you have never been in the penitentiary?

SWAG. So help me, the only *time* I ever done was thirty days in the workhouse, for swipin' a ham in front of a meat shop.

POLICEMAN. Aha! I knew he was a desperate character soon as I set eyes on him. You can't fool the police. Come along now—no more funny business.

SWAG. I'll go with you all right but (*looking at MR. M.*) I'll have the law on somebody for this here business. Just let me get my hat and I'll be ready.

POLICEMAN. All right—be quick about it.

SWAG (*coming down*). It won't take me a minute. (*Exit door R.* POLICEMAN comes down R. C. A loud crash heard off R.)

MRS. B. (*screams*). Mercy on us! (*Rushes out door L.* POLICEMAN rushes out door R.)

MR. M. (*comes down quickly*). What now, I wonder?

THE REAL THING

A Farce in One Act

BY

O. E. YOUNG

AUTHOR OF "POPPING BY PROXY," "THE STRIPED SWEATER," "ALL STARS," "RIDING THE GOAT," "WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE," "WIVES WANTED IN SQUASHVILLE," "AXIN' HER FATHER," "MR. BADGER'S UPPERS," "WHO GITS DE REWARD?" "LOVE AND LATHER," "COON CREEK COURTSHIP," "LOVE AND A CARVING KNIFE," "PAT THE APOTHECARY," "STICK TO YOUR WORD, GAL," "BACK FROM THE PHILIPPINES," ETC., ETC.

THE REAL THING

CHARACTERS

HARTE SAVAGE, *editor of the "Tinkertown Tooter," and an advocate of "Realism."*

DANTE VIRGIL QUILLINGTON, *an aspiring poet.*

Time of Playing—Twenty Minutes.

COSTUMES

HARTE. Age 35. Medium size, black hair and moustache. Wears a neat business suit, a white shirt and collar, and a showy tie.

DANTE. Age 22. Slender, smooth-faced and pale, and of a studious appearance, with flowing, curling hair, sweeping collar. General "esthetic" get-up. He wears a soft white felt hat, a black velvet jacket with silver buttons, a pearl-grey flannel shirt with the collar tied with a huge bow of wide, bright-colored silk ribbon, light-colored knee-pants of mixed gray and brown, with silver buckles at the knee, black silk stockings and low shoes with silver buckles.

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THE REAL THING

SCENE.—Sanctum of the "Tinkertown Tooter." Entrance from left. A large, roller-topped office desk situated right center, with waste-basket beside it. Desk is littered with books and papers. Revolving chair at desk, and one or two other chairs and stools near by. Other stage furnishings such as might be found in the office of any country paper. HARTE SAVAGE is discovered at desk, seen partially in profile. As curtain rises he takes sealed envelope from the desk and speaks.

HARTE. What's this? (*Opens envelope and unfolds contents.*) More poetry! Do the fools think I am running a paper just to print their drivel? "Lines on My Love's Eyebrow," eh? I don't doubt it; she made 'em with india ink or a burnt clove, most likely. (*Looking at signature.*) "Dante Virgil Quillington." I thought so; he's the worst of the lot, and he knows about as much about writing popular verse as a cow does about running a photograph gallery. I'd put him through a course of sprouts if I had him here, or my name isn't Harte Savage. I'll accept your offering, Mr. Dante Virgil Quillington, and file it *there*—for future use in kindling the office fire. (*Crumples up MS. and pitches it into waste-basket.*)

(*Enter DANTE VIRGIL QUILLINGTON.*)

DANTE. Good mawning, sir. Are you the editaw of the "Tinkawtown Tootaw"?

HARTE (*whirling office chair*). Yes—when I'm not a raving maniac.

DANTE (*putting hand in breast pocket*). Well, Mis-

taw Savage, I have bwrought you anothaw offewing of a Muse—

HARTE (*interrupting*). Heaven knows I need amusing, after what I've just been through. What may I call you, sir?

DANTE. I am Dante Virgil Quillington, of Squashville—

HARTE (*throwing up hands in despair*). Oh Lord!

DANTE. No, not a lawd, but something noblaw still—a poet.

HARTE. What in thunder to you poh at?

DANTE. You mistake my meaning. I am one who has stolen the Promethean flame—

HARTE (*interrupting*). Didn't you get arrested?

DANTE. I mean I am one who wields the pen of flame—

HARTE. Gracious! Don't it burn your fingers?

DANTE. No, no; I use the poet's pen, with point of living fiaw.

HARTE. What in thunder do you write on? Asbestos?

DANTE. I object to youaw constwuction, Mistaw Savage. "As best as" is ungwammatical. You should say "as well as." Yes, Mistaw Savage, I wite as well as I can.

HARTE (*aside*). Then you'd better learn another trade.

DANTE. What did you wemark, sir?

HARTE. Never mind. What is your business?

DANTE (*producing MS.*). I have some lines on the dawg—

HARTE (*interrupting*). Lines on a dog? What for? Going to drown him?

DANTE. I mean I have got some lines about the dawg—

HARTE. How did you do it? Lasso him?

DANTE. No, no; not that. I mean I have somes lines witten on the dawg—

HARTE. Whose dog did you write 'em on?

DANTE. Oh, it wasn't any pawticular dawg, you know—

HARTE. Do you mean to say you went to work and wrote lines on some dog just because he wasn't particular?

DANTE. You do not undawstand me yet. I simply wote some verses on the dawg, you know—

HARTE. How did you make him hold still? Hypnotize him?

DANTE. You suahly can not think I wote my wymes on a live dawg? I didn't.

HARTE. Do you mean to say you killed the dog and then wrote verses on his dead body? You'll have the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals after you if you did.

DANTE. No, no, I tell you. My verses are witten on this papaw, (*shaking it at him*) but they were witten we-garding the dawg.

HARTE. What the dickens were you regarding the dog for? Couldn't you find anything better than that to regard while you were writing poetry?

DANTE. I mean I took the dawg for my subject.

HARTE. How could you, if you are not a hypnotist?

DANTE. Why, I was touched by him—

HARTE (*interrupting*). Didn't you touch the dog first?

DANTE (*in desperation*). No, no, no. I was simply touched by the dawg's fidelity.

HARTE. Oh! Then he didn't touch you with his teeth?

DANTE (*wildly*). No, no. He simply impwessed me by his fidelity which nothing but death could ovaw-come.

HARTE. Ah! the dog is dead, then. I suppose it is his obituary you have written?

DANTE. No, it isn't, either. It is a sort of ode—

HARTE (*interrupting*). Then what in heaven's name are you here for? If you owed the dog anything why don't you try and pay his heirs?

DANTE. I have; I have pwoduced a lay—

HARTE (*interrupting, in pretended astonishment*). Produced a lay! Are you trying to make me believe you're an old hen?

DANTE (*desperately*). No, no, no. That's not the kind of a woostaw I am.

HARTE. Well, well! what have you done, then? For heaven's sake explain yourself.

DANTE. Why, I *was* twying to. You see I have been forcibly stwuck by canine fidelity—

HARTE (*interrupting*). I thought you had been struck by a shock of nonsense.

DANTE. What do you mean, Mistaw Savage?

HARTE. Never mind; go on and explain your business. Put in all the details and see if you can't make yourself understood.

DANTE. Vewy well, then. I have some verses witten on the dawg—not on any pawticulaw dawg, you know, but just dawgs in genewal. They are not tattooed in the dawg's hide or painted on his skin, or scwatched into his flesh with a bodkin, a bwadawl, a cwowbar or any othaw instwument. In one sense they are not on the dawg at all, for they are witten on this piece of papaw. (*Holding it up.*) They are composed about the dawg but witten on eight by eleven lettaw cap. Do you compwehend me so far?

HARTE. Yes; I think I'm wabbling along behind your train of thought.

DANTE. Well, then, I want you to take these wymes (*shaking MS. at him again*) and give them to a clamowing public—not by word of mouth, you know, or by posting them on twees and fences, or by setting them to music and then singing them. I want them pwinted—not with a pen or a pencil, a piece of chalk or a bit of charcoal, a paintbwush or a typewiter, but with a pwinting-pwess. Do you still follow me?

HARTE. Yes, sir; you are quite lucid now—in fact as clear as ditch-water.

DANTE. I do not want it pwinted in next yeaw's town weports, on the bills for old Smith's auction, or on the

dance-áwdahs for the Fweemason's ball, but in next week's issue of the "Tinkahtown Tootah."

HARTE (*sarcastically*). Is that all you want?

DANTE No, it isn't. I do not want it pwinted as an obituawy, a sewial stowy, a patent medicine advawtise-ment, or the abstwact of a murdaw twial—but as poetwy. Do your bwains soak up the vawious points of my owa-tion?

HARTE Yes, I believe you've made everything clear at last. It only remains to see what sort of poetry you have written.

DANTE (*eagerly; with satisfaction*). Oh, that is all wight and wegulaw—it's iambic heptametaw.

HARTE What in thunder is that?—something good to eat?

DANTE Why, don't you know? That means my poem is witten in seven-foot lines, with—

HARTE (*amazed; interrupting*). Seven-foot lines! Great Scott! I can't use that kind of stuff.

DANTE Why? What's the twouble?

HARTE Trouble! It's too long.

DANTE Oh, no it isn't. I might have witten it much longaw.

HARTE (*sarcastically*). Oh, I don't doubt you could have made lines a mile long if you had tried; but your style of verse don't suit the subject.

DANTE Why not?

HARTE Who ever heard of using seven-foot lines to write about a little, measly, two-foot dog?

DANTE I'll break them into two lines, of four and three feet altawnately.

HARTE No; four-foot lines might answer to describe a dog with, but three-foot ones—never! Who ever heard of a three-footed dog.

DANTE Why, I can't see any twouble—

HARTE But I can. No three and four-foot lines for me; I couldn't print one stanza on a whole page of the "Tooter." Why, man, my lines are only two inches and a quarter long.

DANTE Oh! I undawstand your ewaw now. A foot

in poetwy isn't a lineaw foot, but two or thwee syllables: Just heaw me wead my wymes and then you'll see. (*Sits and unfolds MS.*)

HARTE (*holding up warning hand*). Hold on! What is the character of your stuff?

DANTE. Oh, it is just ideally idyllic. Just listen—

HARTE (*interrupting*). No use. I can't use anything that isn't really realistic. It would have to be all written over.

DANTE. Well, heaw me wead it, anyhow. You can change it ovaw and poke in all the wealism you want to before you pwint it. (*Prepares to read.*)

HARTE (*aside*). It's no use. I've got to listen to his cussed rot—but if I don't butcher it I'll be skinned in place of Dante Virgil Quillington's dog. (*Throws himself back in chair with a groan.*)

DANTE.

"The dawg is man's most faithful fwiend;

Of wealth he is a scawner.

His fwiendship lasts till life shall end

In some lone churchyawd cawner."

HARTE (*sitting up and putting out hand*). Hold on! Those last two lines will never do. Mouldy graves and mildewed tombstones don't go down with the "Tooter" readers. They want cold, hard facts, instead of your preachments about rotten coffins and crumbling bones. I'm running a real live paper, not an undertaker's shop.

DANTE (*regretfully*). Vewy well; change the last two lines and adapt them to the "Tootaw's" wequiawments—if you think you can impwove them.

HARTE. All right; read that stanza again and I'll fix it—(*aside*)—and don't you think I won't.

DANTE. Heaw goes, then. (*Reads.*)

"The dawg is man's most faithful fwiend;

Of wealth he is a scawner"—(*Stops.*)

HARTE (*slowly; hand over eyes in study*).

He has a tail stuck on one end,
And legs on every corner.

DANTE (*starting to feet indignantly*). I won't have my poetwy wuined by any such foldewol. Would you spoil a beautiful and touching quatwain in that way, sir?

HARTE (*sitting up; sharply*). Beautiful! Do you call the idea of a scraggly old hummock in a lonesome and neglected graveyard beautiful? Ten to one it's under a ragged old fir with the top dead, and the grass around it all wet and mouldy and full of toads and snakes. Is that your idea of a beautiful and touching description?

DANTE (*doubtfully*). No-o—but the ideaw of a dawg with a tail on one end and a leg on each cawner isn't vewy beautiful, or poetic eithaw.

HARTE. Doesn't every dog have 'em there?

DANTE (*reluctantly*). Ye-es.

HARTE. Well, then, what are you kicking about? My lines are the truth, and nine times out of ten yours are not. I never saw many dogs loafing around a graveyard wiping their eyes on a burdock leaf over their master's grave.

DANTE. But—but your lines are widiculous.

HARTE. What if they are? It is the ridiculous thing that makes people laugh—and what is poetry for, if not to be laughed at?

DANTE. But I—I don't like the change. It seems like murdering a helpless baby, don't you know?

HARTE. Your baby will have to be murdered before it can win immortality through the columns of the "Tinkertown Tooter." Love songs and weeping willow poetry are played out with up-to-date papers; only comic doggerel goes. Whoop her up with the next verse. (*Leans back again to listen.*)

DANTE. Well, perhaps so—but it don't seem wight. (*Reads.*)

"His cleaw bwown eyes are fwee fwom guile;
No wong his wath awouses.
His bark of joy, his canine smile,
Makes glad the gloomiest houses."

HARTE. What in thunder is a canine smile?

DANTE. Did you nevaw see a dawg with a smile on?

HARTE. Sure; I've seen 'em with several on—but they were always two-legged dogs.

DANTE. I've seen four-legged ones turn up their lips and show their teeth in a gwin that would make a hawse want to laugh, don't you know?

HARTE. So've I—but they always meant business with that same "canine smile." Then you say in the second line, "No wrong his wrath arouses." Did you ever happen to step on a dog's tail?

DANTE. Ye-es.

HARTE. He didn't show any signs of aroused wrath, did he?

DANTE. Why—why—you see, that is a kind of poetic license.

HARTE. The "Tooter" isn't issuing licenses this year, Mr. Quillington.

DANTE (*hastily*). I think I can fix that all wight, Mistaw Savage.

HARTE. All right. Go ahead and fix it, then. (*Leans back and covers eyes.*)

DANTE (*reading*).

"His cleaw bwown eyes are fwee fwom guile,
Until his wath awouses—awouses—awouses—"

(*Stops and scratches head.*)

HARTE (*sitting up*).

"Until his wrath arouses"
To stick his teeth for half a mile
In some tramp's tattered trousers.

DANTE. No, no; not that way. I should be disgwaced fowevaw if that kind of poetwy should be pwinted ovaw my signatuaw.

HARTE. It's going to be printed in just that way if the "Tooter" gives it a toot in the trump of fame. What's the next verse? (*Leans back and puts tips of thumbs and fingers together.*)

DANTE. It is a lovely one, I think—(*gloomily*) but

I don't suppose you will like it. It runs like this:
(*Reads.*)

"His heart is full of love and twuth
Which no neglect displeases—
His soul full of eternal youth
That mocks at Time's diseases."

HARTE (*thoughtfully*). That isn't so dreadful bad—only I don't understand what it is that mocks at Time's diseases. I can't quite get the sense of it.

DANTE. I—I am afraid there isn't much there—but you know I had to find something to wyme with "displeases." Folks don't expect to find much sense in poetwy nowadays.

HARTE. That's so, but the "Tooter" wants a little, just the same—not nonsense, but plain "hoss sense."

DANTE (*timidly*). May be you could change it a little, Mistaw Savage.

HARTE. Reckon I'll have to. Seems to me you've got in too much about the dog's heart and soul and nothing at all about his body. Read it again, slowly, and I'll put a new tail on your old dog that'll make a wooden Ingin grin. Fire away. (*Leans back and covers eyes.*)

DANTE (*reading*).

"His heart is full of love and truth
Which no neglect displeases—" (*Stops.*)

HARTE (*sitting up*).

His coat is crammed from early youth
With dirt, and mange, and fleases.

DANTE (*starting*). No, no; that won't do at all. That isn't poetwy; it's vulgaw, evewyday pwise.

HARTE. Aren't dogs always covered with those things?

DANTE. Wh—why—ye-es—the common, everyday dawgs are, but it was a higher gwade of dwag I was witing about.

HARTE. It is the common, everyday people the "Tooter" caters to, so it is the common, everyday dog we'll have to deal with. It's no use to fire big guns over

folks' heads—better hit 'em with a popsquirt. We're getting on splendidly. Drive ahead. (*Leans back.*)

DANTE (*reading*).

"From year to year, from youth to age,
He's faithful to his master,
And, as Time turns life's daily page,
Man's dumb friend clings the faster."

HARTE. What does the dumb critter cling to?

DANTE. Cling to? Why—to his master, of course.

HARTE. No, he doesn't; he clings to his master's enemies—the aforesaid tramp, for instance. Provided he is the dog you are trying to describe, he wouldn't grab hold of his master at all, would he?

DANTE. I didn't mean it in a litewal sense, but a figurative one. The dawg clings to his master as one clings to anothaw. I expected all weadaws to undawstand that.

HARTE. You mustn't expect them to understand anything you don't tell 'em—nor that, either, unless it shows right on the face of things. We must tinker that verse a little. Start it off again—I believe I've got it.

DANTE (*reading*).

"From year to year, from youth to age
He's faithful to his master—" (*Stops.*)

HARTE (*quickly*).

And chases still, in daily rage,
His itching tail the faster.

DANTE (*angrily*). You shall not do it. You would tear the wings of poesy from Pegasus himself, and dwarf him to the size and appearance of a common, vulgaw skunk.

HARTE. Of course I would; we have to in order to succeed. Everybody knows what a skunk is, but nine-tenths of the "Tooter's" readers would not recognize Pegasus if they met him face to face in a gin-mill—or notice his good points even if they did. Therefore, wise

editors give their subscribers skunk. Go ahead with the next verse.

DANTE (*reading*).

“And when the faithful dawg at last
Earth’s paths shall cease to travel,
Yield due respect for friendship past—
Love at which none may cavil.”

HARTE (*scornfully*). Huh! That may be poetic, and it may be just, but it isn’t what a faithful dog generally gets or what my constituents want in the way of poetry. We’ll set ’er up for ’em this way:

“And when the faithful dog at last
Earth’s paths shall cease to travel,”
The critter’s tail grab hard and fast
And chuck him under gravel.

DANTE (*starting up in indignation*). No, nevaw; I will not have it so. I pwotest. It isn’t poetwy and it isn’t what a faithful fwiend deserves.

HARTE. Isn’t it what he generally gets?

DANTE. Too often, I’m afwaid.

HARTE. Well, then, it’s realism, and realism is what our readers want, in prose or verse—and we must give it to ’em in order to gather in the shekels.

DANTE. I cannot consent to having my manuscript pwinted with any such vulgaw mutilation.

HARTE. Then we can not use it at all. Of course it isn’t really poetry, but it is all the kind of verse that really sells. We don’t need poetry any way, and what little we do use must be of the sort our patrons like.

DANTE. Vewy well. (*Folds MS. and puts it in his pocket.*) Good mawning, Mistaw Harte Savage. (*Starts toward door.*)

HARTE. Hold on a minute, Mr. Quillington. (DANTE *turns at door*). Let me give you a bit of advice before you go. You are seventy-five years behind the times. The verse that is being read to-day isn’t about the purity of love or the beauty of the soul; it doesn’t picture the

The Separation of the Browns

A Comedy in One Act

By CLARA B. BATCHELDER

("BARBARA BURBANK")

Author of "The Revenge of Shari-hot-su,"

"A Symphony in Black," etc.

The Separation of the Browns

CHARACTERS

MR. PHILLIP VAN HAZELTON BROWN.

MRS. PHILLIP VAN HAZELTON BROWN, *his wife.*

HANNAH, *the maid.*

TIME.—The Present.

PLACE.—At Home.

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how many bags I got to dust. (*Louder and nearer JUDY.*) Some cooks would give notice at havin' trunks dragged across their clean floors and stood on end in their pantries. But I know my place, and even if I have see a body grow out of pig-tails and get married, and baked their cake with my own hands, I ain't askin' them nor their husbands no questions.

JUDY (*suddenly attentive*). No, no, that's right. Don't breathe it to Mr. Brown. You see, it's this way—oh, there's Phil. Give me the bag. Quick! (*Puts it on floor near L. door.*) Phil, dear (*as he enters and puts his arm around her*), I was afraid you wouldn't be back in time. Why, you had your suit-case with you!

PHILLIP. Left it in the hall, dear. (*From now on they are each aggressively smiling and buoyant when observed by the other, but with a tendency to gloom when other's back is turned.*) Are you all ready? I couldn't get your ticket, as you wouldn't say where to?

HAN. Don't know where ye are goin'! What'll I do if there's letters? And them trunks——

JUDY	} (<i>together</i>).	Never mind the trunk, I told you. I'll see that it goes——
PHIL.		Trunk! now see here, Hannah, we are perfectly capable——

JUDY. Do let me get a word in, Phillip. Hannah, come with me and I'll explain. [*Exit JUDY.*]

PHIL. Not a word about my trunk, Hannah. You see, Mrs. Brown and I——

HAN. I seen Mrs. Brown and you times enough, but I ain't never see you this way before. It ain't for me to be havin' opinions about goin's on, but if Miss Judy's mother was to ask me about trunks——

JUDY (*reenters*). Hannah! There's some one pounding at the back door! (*Takes her hat in hand.*) I'll call you when I'm ready to give you directions. (*Exit HAN. JUDY fans herself vigorously.*) I've packed in such a hurry that I'm leaving this room all in a clutter; but that's half the fun of going off on a lark like this.

PHIL. (*gaily*). Yes, isn't it jolly to throw care to the dogs this way. (*She stops her fanning for an appreciable second.*) You in one direction, I in another, and only Hannah to know where.

JUDY (*as he flings himself into easy chair*). I'm so glad you stuck to it. I was afraid you'd want to give it up.

(Goes behind his chair.)

PHIL. I should say nixie! It isn't every fellow gets the run of his tether like this. Some of the boys would give a thousand for such a chance. *(He is so pleased with his effort that he does not look around to notice her dejection. Continues with broad tolerance.)* I dare say, we shall miss each other —

JUDY *(with extreme sweetness)*. But you'll try not to let it spoil your holiday, won't you, Phil? I'd hate to be having a royal time while you —

PHIL. *(cracking a newspaper open rather sharply)*. Don't you worry about me, Judith. I have no desire to intrude on your—your—pastimes. Drop me off your conscience entirely.

JUDY *(going toward the suit-case he has placed to right of his table)*. I've already forgotten I have a husband. Now, are you sure you put your balbriggans —

PHIL. *(catching her)*. Everything I need. You mustn't look at my suit-case. You'd be shocked at the bachelor packing. How about your trunk? Shall I bring it out for the man?

(Starts for door.)

JUDY *(heading him off)*. No, no, it's out of the way already. I thought I'd show you how independent I could be, and we are getting off in such a hurry —

PHIL. *(with an air of self-sacrifice)*. If you'd rather go to-morrow —

(Goes to her table.)

JUDY *(taking an eager step toward him, but becoming reproachful as he turns)*. Of course, if you want to be away on your anniversary—your first anniversary —

PHIL. *(indignant)*. As if I meant that!

JUDY. Didn't we agree —

(Meets him c.)

PHIL. Not on this especial week.

JUDY *(crossing, L.)*. Agree to separate for one week out of every year. Perhaps you can put aside your joyful anticipations long enough to recall that we were married a year ago next Wednesday? *(Becoming jocular.)* So, Phillip van Hazelton Brown, our liberty must end a week from to-day.

quoting. I'm perfectly willing to give up to please you. (*Pulls out hatpins.*) I should not choose to for myself——

PHIL. (*hunting through bookcase*). No, I couldn't think of it. (*She rises to get her gloves.*) I shall have a high old time. I was only thinking of you. Where is that book anyway? I'd like to read those passages again and see just how she kept the—what-is-it?

JUDY (*taking it from her darning basket*). "How I kept the Jewel of Happiness."

PHIL. (*looking over her shoulder*). We might find we had misunderstood. Might be some conditions we had not noticed; something to alter our plans. A remarkable book, wasn't it? The style poetical—or something?

JUDY (*finds the place*). Here it is, the very page. The dear old lady—(*looks earnestly at him*) of course she *was* a dear old lady—and she had lived with him probably until—you know that poem, dear,—“till the golden hair is gray.” (*He puts his arm around her.*) Listen. Mrs. Salisbury says (*she reads with great effusion*) “And I learned that our precious happiness was founded on the rock of our individual independence. Each felt free to wander alone in the blooming meadows of friendship that defined more clearly our path of conjugal union, and to bring thence flowers of kindness and affection to brighten our way. But, so that no neglect of our sunshine, no mistaken narrowness in our feelings each for other, should bar any of the meadowy paths and thus destroy the blessed freedom that linked us closer year by year ——” (*In matter of fact tone.*) It's the test of time, Phil; and they must have been near their golden wedding.

(*Enter HAN., whereat the BROWNS separate.*)

HAN. It ain't any of my business if folks wants to give banquets, and I ain't askin' who's agoin' to eat 'em: only—if it ain't intrudin'—I'd like to know will I have *all* the strawberries for lunch, or save some for a short cake.

PHIL.	}	(<i>together</i>).	Do what you please, do what you please! I must have ——
JUDY			Never mind the meals, Hannah. I will explain later. I (<i>kindly</i>) meant to leave something good for you, Hannah.

HAN. I ain't never had no reflections cast on my appetite before, Mrs. Brown, but if I do eat ye out of house and home, I ain't that hankerin' after porter-house steak, green peas,

strawberries and sich, that I wants two orders of 'em right straight through!

JUDY. Two orders! Surely, Phillip —

PHIL. Sure enough, so I did. You see I was passing the market, and I thought of Hannah, so I just said, "Mr. Lamb, send me up some strawberries and a box of steaks, and —" I say, I'll tell some of the boys to come in to-night —

JUDY. You'll do nothing of the kind. Hannah, you may send back one order. Oh, but, dear (*with a caress*) you may call a cab for me while I tell Hannah. (*He goes.*) Tell them Union Station. Now, Hannah, it's this way: Mr. Brown and I are going to separate —

HAN. (*sitting in straight chair*). Separate! After all them short-cakes? Many's the time your ma said to me, "Hannah, it's your short-cakes that makes up for my short-comin's when Mr. Wentworth's tired. So I thought, Miss Judy, I'd make it easy for you—but there 'tis, deary, if short-cakes won't hold him—and berry season at the full—nothin' can.

JUDY (*merrily*). No, no, only for a week. He's going—oh, somewhere—and I—it's a great secret, you mustn't let him know—but I'm going to stay right here.

HAN. (*unconvinced*). That cab —

JUDY. I'll drive around till train time — (*PHIL. enters.*) Did you get them, Phil? That's all, Hannah. You will have dinner, you understand, so that if Aunt Agatha should come —

PHIL. Aunt Agatha! Well, I guess not! Say, Judy, I couldn't find my handkerchiefs.

JUDY. That's funny. They are always in the second drawer. (*Bustles out.*)

PHIL. Aunt Agatha! Now, see here, Hannah, you telephone her Aunt Agatha that the plumbing, or the gas, or something, has given out —

HAN. (*rising*). It ain't for me to say anything, if folks wants me to risk my immortal soul a lyin' for 'em, but I do say if I was to be left alone in this here flat, and a robber was to come after your weddin' silver —

PHIL. Alone? Oh, that's all right. Don't breathe it to Mrs. Brown, but I thought of that myself. Then, too, if Mrs. Brown should want anything — Besides (*with self-pity*) I don't feel very well—so (*triumphantly*) I'm going to stay right here. (*HAN. throws apron over her head, shakes with laughter.*) What's the matter?

HAN. (*wails*). I was thinkin' how cross I'd been, and you not feelin' well! [*Exit, shaking.*]

PHIL. (*as JUDY enters*). We don't half appreciate Hannah. Why, where did you find them?

JUDY (*going to his bag*). They were right on the top of your chiff.

PHIL. You don't say so! Here, I'll put them in. (*Intercepts her; puts handkerchiefs on table.*) Let's finish our "Jewell." Where were we? Oh, yes. (*Stands c., reads while she leans her head against his shoulder.*) "We resolved that we would yearly part from the way, each in opposite direction; and to this day we have always returned from our pilgrimages feeling that among the men and women we have met and cared for (*they move apart*) there was never one who could quite take the place of the absent companion. Our hearth was livelier, our mutual understanding more keen, for some of the experiences"—um—peculiar choice of language.

JUDY (*taking book*). "The experiences to compare. He having found in the heart of no other woman——" I really think, Phil, it wasn't fair—to the other women—to be looking into their hearts.

PHIL. (*judicially as he takes book*). You mustn't be narrow, Judy. Doubtless he made it an object to learn woman's ideal—what she expects of a man.

JUDY (*tapping sewing-table nervously*). No two women expect the same thing. I'm sure a man modeled after Isabel Armour's notions——

PHIL. (*loftily, as he sits in easy chair*). If you are going to be personal——

JUDY (*jabbing needles in the darning-basket in the ever unsatisfied feminine desire to hit something*). I do think this excursion is going to do no good at all, if you go at it in the wrong spirit.

PHIL. (*hope in his eye and reluctance in his voice*). If you want to give it up——

JUDY. Not for worlds, dearest; do go on.

PHIL. (*leaning back luxuriously*). "In the heart of no other woman such comfort and sympathy; I having convinced myself that the devotion of no other man——" (*Sternly.*) There are some things I draw the line at, Judith (*he sits up*) for your own sake. It's all very well for a man to be larking around, but a girl—a young married woman especially—can't

be too careful of appearances, and I don't propose to be bothered by tales of my wife and the devotion of ——

JUDY (*with dangerous sweetness*). You are perfectly right, Phil. (*As he rises she slips into his chair.*) I feel just as you do about it. (*He walks L., with a pacified grunt.*) Of course I should be very careful ——

PHIL. I should say so.

JUDY. In public. (*He swings around, but she seems not to notice.*) Read on, dear.

PHIL. "The devotion of no other man"—humph—"had so many qualities essential to the jewel of my happiness ——" I don't care much for her style; too flowery and—er—loose. I can't think what we found so inspiring, can you? It strikes me as decidedly flat. (*Grows jovial as she watches him.*) But then, it's a great idea of hers. We'll be no end grateful when you get back a week from to-day.

JUDY. I get back?

PHIL. We, when we get back. Merely a marital you for an editorial we. Naturally, I shall give up my fun in time to receive you here.

JUDY (*rising*). Don't make any sacrifice on my account. I feel myself perfectly free from responsibility. (*Gaily.*) Hardly remember I've had a husband. Oh, did you put in the hose I darned yesterday?

PHIL. Everything, everything.

JUDY. Not very much everything in one small suit-case. (*Happily.*) Your packing is a give-away.

PHIL. What? What? (*Startled.*)

JUDY. You're never going to dress for other girls with the contents of that.

PHIL. (*taking the coat she hands him*). That? Why, didn't you see the expressman take my trunk while you were in your neighbor's this morning? You wouldn't have me at anything less than my best for the Langham girls—and their cousin.

JUDY (*pausing with one arm in the coat*). The red-headed one?

PHIL. (*grinning behind her back*). No, dear, the white-handed one.

JUDY (*struggling between hurt and pride; pride wins*). Isabel! Now you'll be off my mind entirely, dear. I shall know you are being well taken care of and I can forget all about you.

PHIL. (*folding her in his arms*). Yes, Isabel is a famous caretaker, and she knows my little ways so well. She's just about your size, too; so when I am with her I shall feel quite at home. (*She tries to escape.*) I hope you won't be dull in the country—it is the country?

JUDY (*enthusiastically*). And such hills! and woods! a river with thrilling gleams of trout. The men say ——

PHIL. (*releasing her*). The men!

JUDY (*busy with her gloves*). Yes, from Billy's club; they say ——

PHIL. (*in an impartially affectionate tone*). Sometimes I think your brother Billy knocks about with a rather swift set.

JUDY (*with conviction*). He certainly does. (PHIL. *stops to straighten his tie.*) I have always said so. I have warned Billy that this time I should do my best to reform at least *one* of them. You know you can't do those things by wholesale. The poor fellows live at the club all winter, and what they need is a woman's influence. Up there in the woods where the life is so unconventional, you can be on such friendly, confidential footing. You know how it is—the trees and grasses—the wild rambles ——

PHIL. (*with generous ardor*). I hope you won't see any snakes!

JUDY (*in a little indignant shriek*). Phil, you horrid! (*As it dawns on her that she has taken all the joy out of his trip, she turns to hide a smile.*) Oh, I'll be very careful, love, about going around—alone.

PHIL. (*kicking a small rug out of the way*). It makes me feel really selfish to think of sitting on the nice clean sand without any danger of rattlers; but Isabel always did like the shore better on that account. I'll see if your cab is here, Judith.

[Exit PHIL.]

JUDY (*snatching the book from table*). "He having found in the heart of no other woman ——" I've half a mind not to let him go! (*Tears out page.*) Hateful old thing! I would keep him if—that minx, Isabel! If Phil cared a snap he'd never let me go off alone. (*Drags off her gloves.*) He shall not stir a step! No, no, he'd say I kept him at my apron string. Besides, when he comes home and finds I've been alone a whole week and maybe had burglars or something —— (*Sobs.*) Well, I guess I can stand it if he can. (*Seizes her bag and thrusts in the torn page.*) If we gave it up and then quarreled, I should always feel it was my fault.

SEPARATION OF THE BROWNS

It's waiting. (*Enters, reaches for her would let me see you off. rush gets the bag first*). It isn't heavy.

But it will take two or three of Billy's friends

and, one is always enough. (*They go out to the cab? No, let's say good-bye here. Good-bye, good-bye.*

cheerily). Good-bye, good-bye! (*Enters.*)
le-dash mischief maker? (*Kicks the same*
e's the meddling old hag? (*Grabs book.*)
hypocrite! You blooming excrescence on
rot! You—you—— (*Tears out leaf to see the torn place.*) "Other men's devo-
iends, eh? If she hadn't been so everlast-
it getting off alone I'd follow her. (*Flings*
hair.) She's reached the depot. (*Looks at*
s taking the train now. (*Deep dejection.*)
on a fellow when his wife can't stand him a
it wandering in the wilds of these weedy
(*Grins.*) But I stirred her up a bit about
watch.) She's off!

ed, eyes cast down; does not see PHIL. until
down her bag.

Judy! (*Confused.*) Oh, why—
I haven't gone yet.
, joyously). Phil! (*Confused.*) You—I
didn't catch my train.

up, tries to keep her from seeing torn pages).
n?

nally). Thank you, as long as I'm here.
hair.) It's very warm.

. It is warm.

at train doesn't leave until after yours, so
have the pleasure of seeing you off.

I shall not leave until you are gone. You
at.

r her eyes fall on the pages). You always do
en you really want it. (*She steps quickly to*
the way, what train do you take?

PHIL. (*consulting his watch as if it were a time table*). Train? Um—fifteen minutes after yours.

JUDY (*as the suit-case falls open*). Phillip van Hazelton Brown! You were not going away at all!

PHIL. (*blustering*). Well, she doesn't say a fellow can't stay home and entertain a few bachelor friends, does she? Of course if you had stayed, I should have left, but (*brazenly*) I was just consulting the idiot—oracle—and she didn't make the point clear, so I——

JUDY (*radiant, but trying to play martyr*). So that was why you lost your temper at a nice old lady. (*Caresses book*.) Poor book! Of course I shall not go a step now. (*Takes off her coat*.) No, don't argue, Phil. I know my duty, and if you feel that home is the place for you, you shall never say I deserted you. I should not have been the one to propose this, but since I know your pleasure I shall sacrifice my own plans. (*Puts her hat on bookcase, flings gloves into basket*.) No, I should not feel justified in leaving you now. What ever comes will not be my fault. (*Straightens rug*.)

PHIL. (*who has vainly endeavored to get in a word, is perfectly happy but a trifle sulky at bearing all the blame*). You need not "sacrifice" yourself on my account. (*Hopefully*.) Judy! I believe you want to stay! (*Tries to put arm about her*.)

JUDY (*airily*). In this hot town? In these stuffy rooms? When I might be wandering in the cool woods with——

HAN. *enters*.

HAN. There's an extry come and I bought it, but there ain't no one murdered at all. (*Sorrowfully*.)

JUDY (*taking it*). Too bad, Hannah. Oh! (*As HAN. goes*.) Her name, Phil?

PHIL. (*seizing the paper*). Whose?

JUDY (*snatching up the book*). Hers, our book. (*Reads*.) Mrs. Salisbury.

PHIL. (*reads headlines*). Mrs. Salisbury——

JUDY. The old lady——

PHIL. (*as they almost tear the paper in their excitement*). "Old lady!" Listen to this: "The brilliant young"—young, Judy—"young author of 'How I Kept the Jewel of Happiness,' who was married in 1901——" (*Sits in easy chair*.)

JUDY. Then the golden head was not gray——

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S M O K E U P.

SCENE. — *A street showing corner cigar store at L. Two chairs or bench a little R. of C. Time, midnight; lights half up. At rise MARGUERITE is discovered standing motionless as cigar store Indian at corner on a box about one and one-half feet high. She has a box of cigars in one hand and tomahawk in the other. She must stand rigid with one foot a little in advance of the other. The illusion of a wooden statue must be perfect. A few seconds after rise HANS enters up R. and comes down.*

HANS. Ach, Himmel, but dere iss a lonesomeness around here! Not even a sleeping policemen to vake up und make conversations mit. (*Feels in pockets.*) Not even a cigarette to keep company mit meinselb. And der cigarette store closed alreatty. (*Sits on bench.*) Heigh-ho! py chimeny, but dat vas der best musical comedy I never have seen yet. Der girl by der end vas a daisy; she had der rest of der bouquet coming und leaving.

(*Falls asleep. Curtain falls and goes up in one second, showing lights full up and HANS asleep. Clock off stage strikes twelve.*)

MARGUERITE (*stretching her arms*). Say, but I'm glad it's twelve o'clock!

HANS (*falling off bench*). Ach, Himmel, vat iss das?

MAR. What's the matter? Did anybody speak to you?

HANS. Does mein ears und eyes deceive me yet — vat dere vas in that last cheese sandvich dat vent to mein head I don't know alreatty.

MAR. Did I understand you to mention a cheese sandwich?

HANS. Now dat cheese sandvich iss getting in its goot vork all right.

MAR. He needed a tobacco sign, so he used me.

HANS. How many hours do you hafe to vork a day yet?

MAR. Think of it! I have to stand there twenty-three hours out of every twenty-four! It's worse than one-night stands with a rehearsal and matinee every day.

HANS. How much does he pay you?

MAR. He doesn't pay me anything — except attention. He talks to me when his wife isn't near, but of course I can't talk back.

HANS. You can't talk backwards! Ach, Himmel! dot iss awful very terrible.

MAR. Isn't it, though! I can't even have the last word!

HANS. I tells you, vhy don't you join de unions and strike mit less time for more money?

MAR. You don't understand.

HANS. No, I'm glad I don't; if I did I would be crazy, too, yet.

MAR. I am turned to wood from one o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock at night, and there is only one way to counteract the effects of the cli-odiform di-odiform.

HANS. Yah, vich vay iss it?

MAR. I have to hold a porous plaster on the top of my head for ten minutes; that draws all the drug out of the system; then burn the plaster with a Chinese match. But you see the drug stores are closed when I come to life.

HANS. Promise me dat mein vife you vill be, und I vill bring you the plaster of paris to-morrow night.

MAR. Can you support a wife?

HANS. Dat depends; how much do you veigh alreatty?

MAR. No, no; I mean do you earn enough money to keep me in the manner my taste and style demand?

HANS. Vill you promise me not to play bridge-whist?

MAR. Yes, if I can keep two maids and a private secretary, as I have been accustomed in the past.

HANS. Wery vell, I vill took de risk if you vill promise to keep away from der compartment stores vhen dey hafe bargain counters.

MAR. All right; I'll promise that, if you will let my mother come and live with us as long as she likes.

HANS. Say, honest, now, I draw der line on der mamma-by-der-laws! If she lived with us ve would be sure to fight all der time yet.

MAR. Oh, I can fix that all right —

HANS. Dere iss only one vay to fix dot und dot iss to fix der mamma-by-der-laws.

MAR. No, I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll get you to go on the stage with me. You'll be an actor; then we can quarrel and it won't make any difference.

HANS. Eh, vat iss dere answer?

MAR. Well, people on the stage have to make-up every night you know.

HANS. Iss dot so? Say, where vill ve live when ve are married by each otter — on der Lake Shore Drive or der Auditorium Hotel? (*Mention local district and hotel.*)

MAR. No; let's rent a nice little four-room flat.

HANS. Four-room flat? Dot iss a new one; vot it iss?

MAR. It's a large room divided into four small compartments. We'll get one with electric lights and steam heat.

HANS. Electric lighted und steam heated; ain't dot pretty oxpensive?

MAR. Oh, no; it's a great saving.

HANS. Savings, eh, vat did you say der answer vas?

MAR. Oh, it saves matches.

HANS. Tell me, where would ve got der steam heated from?

MAR. Oh, we would get the steam heat from the janitor.

HANS. Janitor? Vot iss it?

MAR. Don't you know what a janitor is? Well, in your country he would be the same as a king, but here he is more like a life insurance president.

HANS. I know; he keeps all of your money.

MAR. Well, most of your money goes to the landlord, but the janitor lets you live.

HANS. Real nice of him, ain't it? Iss dot allus?

MAR. Well, to be sure of always having hot water, one has to get up pink teas for the janitor's wife.

SMOKE UP.

HANS. Pink tea! Dat iss another new one.

MAR. Oh, a pink tea is a social gathering a reputation of every woman not present is murder blood.

HANS. Murdered! Ach, Himmel, don't d rested for all dose murders?

MAR. No, of course not; not any more th arrested.

HANS. I? vot would I get arrested for yet?

MAR. You murder the English language, d

HANS. Vell, maybe I do; but it's in self-de

MAR. You never heard me sing, did you?

HANS. Of course not.

MAR. Why do you say of course not?

HANS. I thought you tolt me you vas a cho

MAR. Well, so I am.

HANS. I nefer saw a chorus vomens dat already.

MAR. Now I'll just show you that I can sir

HANS. You can't sing in dese places yet; d lime-light to bathe yourself into.

MAR. Well, there's a property moon. (Mo I guess that will do.

(Song.)

HANS. I took back all I said aboutid choi Tell me, please, hafe you der key to der cigaret

MAR. No, of course not; what do you wai key?

HANS. Oh, I have smoked nothing for so time — twenty minutes almost.

MAR. (offering cigar box). Try one of these.

HANS. (gingerly). Vot kind of rope iss it?

MAR. Rope! Why, those are made of p tobacco.

HANS. Dey must be very expensive. Vot i of one?

MAR. Ten cents.

HANS. Ten cents for one? Dat iss ten den they charge me for a bag of cigarettes. H

vill one of dese ropes — oh, I beg your pardon — vill one of dese cabbage leaves last ten times as long as a cigarette yet?

MAR. No; but if you smoke these instead of cigarettes you will last ten times as long.

HANS. Iss eet possible! Den when ve are married each one by the other, I vill smoke dese ropes — oh, I beg your pardon — instead of joining der Life Insurance Graft Society.

MAR. What do you know about life insurance graft?

HANS. I vill tell you. Mein second cousin vas a step-brother to der third cousin of der youngest son of a life insurance president.

MAR. Well, what of it?

HANS. Vot of it? Now ve both hafe to vork for a living.

(HANS takes cigar out of box and gives MARGUERITE money.)

HANS. Coupons, please.

MAR. What are you saving your coupons for?

HANS. I am saving enough to get a double-barrelled shot gun.

MAR. Now what do you want with a shot gun?

HANS. Mein mother-by-der-law is afraid —

MAR. Your mother-in-law! Why, you didn't tell me you were married! You're the second married man that's asked me to marry him, but I warn you that you won't get off as easy as the first.

HANS. Now wait a minute, wait a minute, don't got so excited. Mein vife has left me und gone to Sox City or North Dakota, I don't know vchich, vit another man.

MAR. Gone with a handsomer man, eh?

HANS. Vell, he may hafe been once; but he wasn't any handsomer when I got through vit him.

MAR. Why, what did you do to him?

HANS. Did to him, did to him? I gave him just one look.

MAR. By the way—

HANS. Oh, buy der beer; I'd much rather hafe it.

MAR. Beer! why, I haven't drank anything but champagne in all my life.

SMOKE U

HANS. Iss dot so yet? Ah champagne did you make famous

MAR. Oh, there was never er keep me going. The Johnnies us per, you know. (*Laughing.*) I when they paid the bill they got

HANS. It must be very oxpen

MAR. I can squash the fat Johnny that ever waited at the mobile.

HANS. How could you squa does it look like?

MAR. It looks like an elephant

HANS. Don't you think ve champagne vhen ve are married

MAR. Oh, that will be all ri me now! (*Tragically.*) The h when I must again be turned to feel the tissues of my body stif dread hour approaches. (*Goes t get not to bring the porous plaster would make the Indian maiden spoken slowly.*)

HANS. Don't leaf me, Margu vill bring you porous plasters b; only don't leaf me! Ach, Him token by vlich to vear mein hea again!

(She takes a flower from her hair as the clock off stage strikes o and she stands as at beginning

HANS. Ach, I vill sell all va jewelry, and buy porous plasters; thing I hafe in der world and bi buy all der porous plasters in tl market, and to-morrow night lay on top of her head!

QUICK CUR

(Curtain goes up in one second, showing stage as at first; lights half up, HANS asleep on bench, etc.)

HANS (*waking up*). I mean on top of her head! Ach! Oh! vot iss! Himmel! I must have been dreaming!

QUICK CURTAIN.

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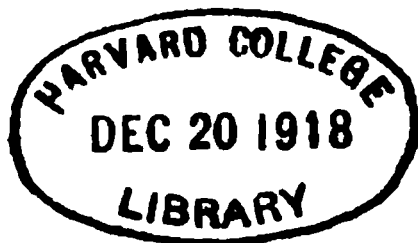
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CARELESS CUPID, *3 males, 2 females.*

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CARELESS CUPID

A Negro Farce in One Act

BY

F. E. HILAND

**AUTHOR OF "THE OLD COUNTRY STORE," "A TOWN MEETING," "BROKEN BONDS,"
"ROONEY'S RESTAURANT," "CAPTAIN SWELL," ETC.**

CHARACTERS.

*As originally produced at Bradford, Vt., Oct. 15th, 1891, for the benefit
of the Public Library*

REUBEN YEASTCAKE, a Baker	MR. F. E. HILAND
ELI GETTHERE, his Clerk	MR. E. E. MUNN
CUPID, a no-good Nigger	MR. WM. DAVENPORT
MRS. YEASTCAKE	MISS JOSIE ROWELL
DOROTHY, her Daughter	MISS MARION MUNN

Costumes eccentric.

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CARELESS CUPID.

SCENE. — *A plain interior.*

(*Confused conversation at curtain. YEASTCAKE discovered kneading dough in trough, talking with his wife.*)

YEASTCAKE. And I say she sha'n't; do you hear that?

MRS. YEASTCAKE. Oh, you needn't yell the top of the house off. I hear enough, goodness knows.

YEAST. The idea of that chump trying to play the agreeable to our dear Dorothy — it's preposterous.

MRS. Y. Humph! I guess he's as good and stands as high in the world as you did when I condescended to marry you, Reuben Yeastcake.

YEAST. Condescended! Well, now, that's cool. You, the daughter of old Snips the tailor, who didn't get a square meal once a week, *condescended* to marry me, and move right into a bake-shop where victuals are thicker than flies in August. Great condescension that was.

MRS. Y. Stop running down my family, if you know when you are well off. If my father was a poor tailor, he didn't cheat folks in measure as you do in weight. So there!

YEAST. Hush, hush, my dear! Some one will hear you, and I shall be ruined.

MRS. Y. Well, then, keep quiet yourself, and let my family alone.

YEAST. What has all this got to do with keeping that clerk of ours where he belongs?

MRS. Y. He is where he belongs, isn't he? You hire him to stay here and help you; and if he chooses to come into the front parlor once in a while, and perhaps speak to our daughter, what's the harm? He's a nice, respectable young man, I'm sure.

YEAST. You wouldn't think so or say so if you didn't delight to torment me. No, sir; no baker's clerk shall marry my daughter, for I'm determined she shall rise in the world like the rest of my works.

MRS. Y. He will rise in the world, I am sure of that. You

know he is trying to study medicine, and is working his way along. Oh, he'll be famous some day.

YEAST. Well, I'll be dished if he hasn't completely pulled the wool over your eyes. Medicine! Pshaw! He'll never know enough about medicine to doctor a sick cow. All the rising in the world you get out of him will be to have him rise in the morning after I've called him fifteen or twenty times.

MRS. Y. Trying to be funny now, ain't you, smarty? Plagued if I'll stay any longer talking to a fool! (*Exit quick, R.*)

YEAST. Go it, old cyclone, you can't scare me. That Eli has made a fool of her, and she's ready to let him try and steal our Dorothy's affections. But they haven't come it over the old man yet. Not much, if he knows himself. I've advertised for another boy to learn the business, and when I've once got him broke in, I'll send Mr. Eli where he can hunt up somebody else's daughter to get spooney over. (*Has finished kneading bread and put it in tins.*) There, that job is done. Now where is that scamp? (*Calls.*) Eli, Eli! Come in here, and tend to your business.

ELI (*enters R.*). What's wanting, sir?

YEAST. Why haven't you been in here before, sir? What have you been doing?

ELI (*confusedly*). Oh, nothing. That is — I —

YEAST. See here, I want you to remember one thing, and that is, remember your place. Remember your place, sir, and be very careful that your duties as my assistant don't lead you to spend any of your valuable time in the front parlor. Understand?

ELI (*humbly*). Yes, sir.

YEAST. And bear in mind that if any one in my employ so far forgets his station as to seek for any intimacy with the family — ahem! — and especially, sir, my daughter, he will be immediately dismissed.

ELI. Sir, I will try and remember that your peerless daughter is as far above me as the upper crust is above the under.

YEAST. Hem! A very poor comparison, sir, for in most cases there is generally a good deal of softness between them.

ELI. There can be none in this instance, sir, since our positions at present forbid it. Had I attained the lofty heights in society at present occupied by yourself, I might dare to have other aspirations. When I have mastered the science of drugs, I may hope to make as much out of them as you have.

YEAST. What do you mean, sir?

ELI. Simply that to a conscientious adherence to the use of one simple drug you owe all your prosperity.

YEAST. And that is —

ELI. Alum.

YEAST. Young man, be careful that you don't know too much. Now go and attend to your duties in the front shop.

ELI. By the way, sir, there's a colored boy out there who says he wants to see you.

YEAST. Very well, show him in here at once. (*Exit ELI, R.*) Probably an answer to my advertisement. (*Enter CUPID, R., hands in pockets.*) What do you want here, young man?

CUPID (*yawning*). Don't want anyting jis' now.

YEAST. Well, then, what are you here for?

CUP. (*yawning again*). Gib it up. You tell.

YEAST. See here, now, none of your impudence. Make known your business or git.

CUP. Don' git riled, boss. I didn't know but I might consent ter go in snacks wif yo' here.

YEAST. What do you mean by snacks?

CUP. Why, you do de bossin', and I do de work, see?

YEAST. Clear out!

CUP. Ef you don' like dat, why, den yo' do de work and I'll do de bossin'.

YEAST. What can you do; you can't work, can you?

CUP. Yessir. I kin eat an' I kin sleep, and de res' ob de time jes' lay round. Say, boss, whar's yo' lounge? I'se gettin' tired standin' yere. (*Gapes.*)

YEAST. You're a pretty specimen of activity, ain't you?

CUP. See here, I ain't no specimen. I'm a straight out nigger, I am, yessir.

YEAST. Well, you look like it. I want a boy to learn the business. Do you want a job?

CUP. Say, boss, how much yo' pays?

YEAST. I board and clothe beginners, and give them twenty-five dollars the first year.

CUP. Look here, boss; hadn't yo' rudder gib me less pay an' more ter eat?

YEAST. You'll get enough to eat, anyway, sir.

CUP. Don' know 'bout dat. I'se libbed wid an old woman what tole me de same ting. She used ter eat fus', den gib what she didn't want to der dog, and what he lef' de cats an' I cud fight for.

YEAST. Do you know anything about the baking business?

CUP. Yessir, I knows. De kinds ob victuals dey makes one part flour, ten parts air.

YEAST. None of your lip. I mean, have you worked in a bake-shop any?

CUP. Yes, boss, a little. (*Yawns.*)

YEAST. And do you knead bread?

CUP. Need bread? Yo' bet yo' life I needs bread tree times a day regular, and twice fur luncheon.

YEAST. Pshaw! fool, I mean can you work it with your hands?

CUP. Don't know, boss. I'se allus done it wif my mouf.

YEAST. What a nice intelligent boy you are! Say, what's your name?

CUP. Cupid.

YEAST. Cupid—the god of love! Well, you'd make a nice god of love, you would. Where's your bow and arrow?

CUP. My which, boss?

YEAST. Why, your bow and arrow, to shoot people and make them love each other. Didn't you ever hear of Cupid's darts?

CUP. No, sir; nebber heard nuffin' 'bout dem ar tings — what you calls Cupid's tarts; but I'se heard lots 'bout cream tarts. Say, got any layin' round? I'se gittin' hungry.

YEAST. Come out in the front shop, and I will try and fill up that cavity of yours; that is, if you want to work a few days on 'trial.

CUP. Yes, boss. I'll work a few days tryin' yo' victuals, if that's what yo' want. Lead on. Whar duty calls me, dar I am. Say, better order annuder bakin' right away.

(*They exeunt, R.; enter ELI, L.*)

ELI. What's old Yeastcake up to now, I wonder? I mistrust that he's plotting some mischief against my humble self, and that nigger is an accomplice. But Eli don't get left, if he knows himself. I'm going to marry your daughter, old man, in spite of you. Hem! That is, if the grocer's boy round the corner don't cut me out. He's been trying to lately. I've got the old lady so she thinks I know more than the encyclopædia. Courage, then, Mr. Getthere; luck and fortune favor the brave. I yet may be able to say, *Veni, vidi, vici — horam, gorum ring torry torum*. (*Shouts last loudly; skips round. Enter, L., MRS. YEASTCAKE; he sees her, and suddenly smooths out his face, and tries to look wise.*)

MRS. Y. Ah, Mr. Getthere, I heard you speaking in a foreign language. I presume you are learning the names of some medicines.

ELI. Yes, ma'am, yes. And it will be fine medicine too, if I can get it.

MRS. Y. And why can't you get it, pray?

ELI (*confusedly*). Why, you see, — that is, it comes very expensive, and I shall have to work long in order to get the money.

MRS. Y. Dear Mr. Getthere, do not get discouraged. Remember that hard work accomplishes wonders. You have my sympathy and support, I am sure. I always feel interested in young men who are striving to rise in the world.

ELI (*aside*.) She ought to be, if she knows how hard I'm striving to be her son-in-law. (*Aloud.*) Thank you, dear Mrs. Yeastcake; your kind words will ever be remembered.

MRS. Y. I suppose it takes lots of hard study to learn how to become a doctor.

ELI. Oh, yes, ma'am; I assure you it does. I've sat up often till three o'clock in the morning learning (*aside*) how to play poker.

MRS. Y. Then I presume you understand now something about diseases and their names.

ELI. Yes, certainly; there's chicken-pox, measles, kleptomania, idiosyncrasy, rhinocercobanica, catchemandkillemquick, and a good many others.

MRS. Y. Indeed, what learned and scientific names some of them have. What a head you must have to remember so much!

ELI. Madam, you flatter me.

MRS. Y. And don't you think that a restricted circulation is a very serious disease?

ELI. I do. It is a very alarming and emaciating disease. My pocket-book has often suffered with it.

MRS. Y. I sometimes fear that my heart is affected.

ELI (*sentimentally*). Indeed! I know mine is.

MRS. Y. And knowing that you had learned so much about doctoring, I want your advice. If you felt sort of nasty and disagreeable all over, what should you take?

ELI. Well, I should take a bath.

MRS. Y. And soak your feet?

ELI. Yes. (*Aside.*) And my head too, if it was soft as yours.

(*Enter CUPID, R.*)

CUP. (*mouth full of cracker*). Boss wants yer in de front shop.

MRS. Y. Sakes alive! What on earth's that?

ELI. That, madam, is our new assistant, I believe.

MRS. Y. What are you in here for, you good-for-nothing nigger?

CUP. Kase de boss tole me ter come in an see whedder yo's done got troo buzzin' his clerk. Dat's wot he said. (MRS. YEAST-CAKE *jumps up.*)

MRS. Y. Land alive! I'll see whether he's going to hire a black nigger to sass me! (*Exit in rage, R.*)

ELI. So you are going to learn the trade, are you?

CUP. A — which? (*Hands deep in pockets.*)

ELI. I say, you are going to learn the baking profession.

CUP. Nop. I ain't gwine ter learn nuffin, youse gwine ter learn me.

ELI. Who is?

CUP. Why *you* is; dat's what's de boss said.

ELI. All right. (*Aside.*) I'll have some fun with this fellow. (*Aloud.*) Say, what's your name?

CUP. My name's Cupid. De boss said I was de god of love.

ELI. Well, you are a lovely child, and no mistake. Now, Cupid, I'm going to teach you how to cook. Perhaps you'll get a job at Delmonico's after I get through with you.

CUP. All right, boss; Ise your huckleberry.

ELI. Let's see. I guess we will make some jumbles to commence with. How'll that do?

CUP. Fus' rate. I kin jumble dem fur yo'.

ELI. You see that mixing-trough over there? Now roll up your sleeves and stand by it, and I'll read off the recipe to you.

CUP. (*stands by trough*). Let de band play, Smiff.

ELI. Take one quart of flour, one cup of sugar, and a teaspoonful of soda; a piece of butter as big as you need, and a pint of milk. Now, what did I say?

CUP. Pint of butter, teaspoonful of milk, a quart of soda, and all de flour yo' wants.

ELI. By gracious ! I guess you would have jumbles. Now do what I tell you. Take a measure of flour out of the barrel there, and put it in the mixer. Now put in that milk. (*Hands him dishes ; CUPID obeys.*) Now put in this butter.

CUP. (*smelling of it*). Golly, boss, dis nigger wouldn't like ter hab dat butter bit him.

ELI. Why?

CUP. Kase it's strong enough ter strike frum de shoulder.

ELI. Never mind ; that's the kind the bakers use.

CUP. All right. Here she goes. (*Puts it in.*)

ELI (*gives him bowl and egg*). Now, break that egg. (*CUPID squeezes egg in hands ; this egg should be hard-boiled.*) What in time are you about?

CUP. Golly ! Yo' said break it, an' Ise done it.

ELI (*breaks egg — a substituted raw one — himself into bowl*). Now beat it.

CUP. Which?

ELI. Beat it, I tell you.

CUP. Say, boss, whar's yo' club?

ELI. What do you want of a club?

CUP. How yo's 'specs Ise gwine ter beat it widout no club?

ELI. Pshaw ! I mean stir it round. Here, take this. (*Gives him spoon. ELI comes down, snickers and chuckles ; CUPID beats egg. Aside.*) He'll find that egg rather ancient, I'm thinking. (*Aloud.*) There, that will do. Now you must taste it to see if it is the right flavor.

CUP. (*tastes egg with spoon ; makes up face, gags and spits, comes down to ELI*). Say, boss, you busy now?

ELI. No ; why?

CUP. (*handing him bowl*). Jes' take dat ting out-doors an' air it, will you?

ELI. Why, ain't it good?

CUP. Yas, sah ; ef you wants ter start a phosphate factory, it's jes' de ting.

ELI. Never mind the egg, then ; we can't waste any more. Now stick in your hands and go for it. (*CUPID kneads mixture ; gets hands all dough ; acts as though he did not know what to do.*)

ELI. Well, nigger, what's the matter now?

CUP. Say, I ain't proud, but I'm awful stuck up. (*Holds up his hands.*)

ELI. Can't you get it off your hands? (*CUPID tries to.*)

CUP. No, boss ; it's done bound ter stay.

ELI. What in the world are you going to do?

CUP. Don' know, boss ; don' know. O Lawd, Ise a ruined nigger!

ELI. Say, if I'll tell you how to get that dough off of your hands, will you be my friend for life?

CUP. 'Deed, boss, I will.

ELI. And if you see any courting going on here, you won't peach on me to the old man, will you?

CUP. No, no, boss; nebber a preach. (ELI puts in more flour.)

ELI. Rub your hands in that, now. (CUPID rubs dough off.) I'll finish your cake. (ELI kneads dough.)

CUP. Say, say, I don't want ter take any more singin' lessons of you.

ELI. This ain't a singin' lesson, you greeny —

CUP. Well, I t'ought it might be. Ise been practisin' on *do*, anyhow; an' I didn't know but yo' might hab a *ray* ob hope fur *me*, so *far* that I cud *sol lar ce* myself wif — suthin' ter eat, *do*.

ELI (has kneaded dough). Here, take this out to the boss, and tell him to bake it.

CUP. Hi, golly! Here's a cake made out of dis nigger's own head.

ELI. That would be real old nigger-head, wouldn't it? (Exit CUPID.) So the old gent is getting ready to dispense with my services, is he? We'll see about that. (Enter DOROTHY, L., with newspaper.) Ah, here comes the light of my existencè — the beacon star that shall lead me on to do and dare.

DOROTHY. Busy, Mr. Eli?

ELI. Yes, busy with thoughts of you, my charmer, whose image is never absent from my mind's eye, and whose form — (strikes forehead blindly) — whose form —

DOR. Whose form will be absent from your real eye if you don't stop your foolishness and talk sense.

ELI. How can I, when I am dazzled by the light of your presence?

DOR. Mr. Eli, didn't you ever hear of an animal found in nearly every house?

ELI. No, what is it? Bed-bugs?

DOR. Pshaw! Bed-bugs ain't animals; it's *rats*, Mr. Eli. Didn't I see you staring at the butcher's daughter at church last night?

ELI. Why, that was only because I was thinking how homely she was compared with you.

DOR. O Eli, what a dear old goose you are. (Takes chair.) Come, let's sit down and visit.

ELI. Certainly; I'm agreeable. (Draws chair close beside her.)

DOR. No, no, you mustn't! (Draws away.) What if pa should come in?

ELI. I should be flying through the door the next minute.

DOR. Yes, he's awful cross if I even look at you. Says I must be careful who I associate with.

ELI. Well, that's right; I thought so too when I saw you talking with that red-headed grocer's clerk around the corner.

DOR. (*slapping ear with paper*). Get out, you old jealous.

ELI. What are you reading there — a love story?

DOR. No; there's such a nice joke in here, I came in to read it to you.

ELI. What is it? About a Boston girl?

DOR. No, it's about a (*local*) girl. See if I can find it. (*Opens paper; sits facing R.; ELI beside her, looking over shoulder; hold paper wide open and steady so CUPID can hit it; arrow comes in R.; DOROTHY jumps up, screaming.*) Mercy! What's that? (*CUPID enters, grinning; bow in his hand.*)

ELI. Say, what are you about there?

CUP. Hi, golly! De boss said dat cupids had bows and arrers what dey shot ter makes folkses love one annudder, an' Ise got one. An' I peeked in yere an' t'ought by yo' actions dat yo' wanted de missy ter lub yo' powerful bad, so I let her fly.

ELI. Look-a-here, nigger, you go and count the clocks in the jeweller's window, and come back sometime and tell me how many there are, and I'll give you a quarter. Take your time now.

CUP. All right, boss, I elevates. (*Exit, L.*)

ELI. Dear Dorothy, I'm in despair. Something has got to be done right away. Your respected father suspects that I think too much of you, and *vice versa*. Now we have either got to win him over or fly.

DOR. Oh, dear! I'm afraid he'll never give his consent. Perhaps it would be better for us to part.

ELI. No, no! I'll never leave you. Life without you would be a failure — a dreary blank. (*Takes her hand to lips.*) My first and only love —

CUP. (*enters slowly; yawns long and loudly at ELI's last line.*) Had jes' fourteen.

ELI. Confound that nigger! Say, go down to the station and see what time the six o'clock train leaves.

CUP. Gib me de quarter fus', boss.

ELI (*throws money*). There, git. (*Exit CUPID.*) That fool of a nigger has put an idea into my head. I've been having lots of fun with him; getting him to mix up some dough. Now I'm a believer in the power of the imagination. I'll pretend that the darky got in some drug that I had lying round by mistake, and that in tasting the mixture, as he will, out at the oven, he has been poisoned; and then, of course, I shall think of an antidote, and save his life. So don't be frightened at what you may see. What do you think of the scheme?

DOR. One worthy of that great head of yours.

ELI. Thanks, darling; now give me a kiss.

DOR. You say you believe in the powers of imagination?

ELI. I certainly do.

DOR. Well, then, just imagine that you have kissed me, and it will do just as well. (*Starts off.*)

ELI (*running and seizing her by waist*). You don't fool me like

that. (*Sloops to kiss her; enter CUPID; shouts loudly, drawing.*)

CUP. Sixty minits past five. (*They jump; DOROTHY screams.*)

ELI. You back again? If I was you I'd stay away. Do you know what you've done, sir? I will tell you, you have poisoned your master, sir. You hear — poisoned him, by putting in the wrong stuff into that cake; and now you'll be hung by the neck until you are dead, dead, dead!

CUP. (*groaning*). O boss, don't say so! Don't say so, boss. O Lawd! O Lawd! What's dis nigger gwine ter do? Don't let dem hang me, boss, don't let dem! Oh, oh — oh — oh. (*Kneels.*)

ELI. You'll have to hide then. Here, get into the flour-barrel there, quick. (*CUPID groans and gets into barrel.*)

(*Enter MR. and MRS. YEASTCAKE, R.*)

YEAST. What's all this noise about?

ELI (*tearing his hair*). How can I tell it, oh, how can I?

YEAST. What do you mean? Are you going crazy?

ELI. Oh, dear! Have you tasted any of that cake I sent in?

YEAST. Why, of course; I always do.

ELI. Ah! I shall go crazy! I know I shall! Sir, prepare yourself for the worst.

YEAST (*alarmed*). Why, what is the matter?

ELI. I can't tell it, I can't. O sir, by mistake that boy of yours has mixed in a pound of arsenic that I had here for experiment. You have not an hour to live —

YEAST (*sinks into a chair*). That is then what makes me feel so strangely. Already I am in agony. Do something, quick! I can't die! I can't die! Mercy! Ah, mercy! (*Holds on to his stomach, and rolls about as if in pain.*)

MRS. Y. Save him! Ah, save him! I shall be a widow. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! (*Wrings hands.*)

ELI. I could, but he distrusts my powers.

YEAST. I never will again. Save me! Ah, save me, and I will give you anything!

ELI. Even to your darling daughter?

YEAST. Yes, oh, yes. Give me something quick, I'm going!

ELI. The remedy for arsenic is albumen. Eggs! quick! (*Gets bowl like one egg was broken in.*) Drink this. (*Gives it to YEASTCAKE; comes down; aside.*) I'll get that rotten egg into the old man anyway.

YEAST (*drinks; spits and gags*). O Lord, what stuff! I shall die, I know I shall.

ELI (*feels his pulse*). Ha! the remedy is working.

YEAST (*spitting*). O Jiminy, I guess it is!

ELI. Already the pulse is improving.

YEAST. My stomach ain't improving. Bah!

DOR. O pa, I'm so glad you are better. And you owe your life to Eli.

YEAST. And I owe my sickness to him too. Well, I'll have revenge; he'll have to buy your fine fixings after this.

ELI. I am content; for in your daughter I have found my fate, and Cupid smiles on our union. Don't you, Cupid?

CUP. (*rising from barrel, all flour*). Bet yer life!

CURTAIN.

PROPERTIES.

Empty flour-barrel, with flour in dish in bottom; tray; flour; two bowls; newspaper; bow and arrow; two eggs; spoons; roll-board; pin; bake-tins.

DE TROUBLE BEGINS AT NINE.

AN ACT

FOR BONES AND BANJOIST.

AS PLAYED AT

644 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 1900.



CHARACTERS.—[DR TROUBLE BEGINS AT NINE.]

Professor Quackinbush.....Lew Simmons.
Ephraim.....Charley White.

COSTUMES.

PROFESSOR.—Long white coat, with large buttons, the sleeves very ragged, and tied up with string of all colors—plaid waistcoat—striped shirt, with large standing collar—drab breeches, patched, coming down to the ankle—striped grey stockings—heavy shoes, with wooden soles—very much battered white hat, with brim and crown loose, and held on by string.

EPHRAIM.—Tight-fitting boy's jacket and trousers of dark blue, with brass buttons, comic patches—sleeves of jacket too short, and tight under the armpits—very broad white turned-down collar—close curl wig—cap of cloth—grey stockings, and coarse shoes.

SCENE.

An Interior, closed in R. and L. (if possible), with practicable doors, R. and L. 1 R., and C. in F.—a couple of rude portraits on wall, crockery on shelves painted, &c. If a change of scene, fasten up a clothes-line in one corner up stage, and hang a pair of socks and a holey handkerchief on it.

PROPERTIES.

A chair L. and R. front—bag of glass, &c., ready R., for crash—bag of glass, &c., ready L., for breaking window sound—a mock banjo, with head of paper to be broken—handful of flour ready R. 1 R.

DE TROUBLE BEGINS AT NINE.

PROFESSOR QUACKINBOSH, with shouldered banjo, enters leisurely, R. 1 E. D. to C.,—looks round, takes off his hat, wipes his forehead with handkerchief—crosses to L. front, and brings chairs to C.

Professor Let' sot down. [Sits down in one chair, and lays his banjo on the other.] Relaxavacation arter a long day's work at de sublime study of whitewashing, an' de sweeping arguments ob carpet-shaking, am a great inwention. If I on'y get a few hours' quiet, I'll practice dat new song dat I mean to astonish the fokes wid. [Takes banjo on his lap, when the rags of his coat-sleeve pull the strings; discovers the cause of the sound, and ties up the rent, one string in his hand, and the other between his teeth, as he draws the knot; speaks in the act.] Dis coat o' mine is gittin' shaky in de j'intz—it's like a wheat-eran among de tares! [Flourishes his arm.] Dat's all right for anodder monf—I mus' buy new apparel by nex' Ape-r-il! [Begins to play, stops, takes off his hat, brushes it carefully, and sets it down on stage left side of him.] It won't take much more before I'll be started. [Begins to play, stops, crosses one leg on the other, plays, stops, changes leg for leg, plays several bars, and finds that his foot is swinging to the time; ceases to play, gradually, but the foot continues to swing; he lays down banjo L. of him, and suddenly clasps both hands on his knee, which stops the foot. Both feet on the ground; takes up banjo with faint laugh of triumph, begins to play, evinces uneasiness in his seat, plays nervously. Still playing, rises and looks down at seat of his chair. Still playing, dusts off chair with coat-tail, steps across the chair, and sits down, playing. Displays same uneasiness, turns half R., looks at other chair, keeps his eyes fastened on it, lays his banjo L. of him, rises, goes around behind R. chair to R. side of it, bends over it, picks up pin on it, sticks pin in left sleeve, rises, comes behind chairs, triumphantly.] I knowed dar was a pin somewhar! [Takes seat as before, takes up banjo, strikes chord.] In hopes we'll hab a tune at las'. [Playing, his banjo handle catches his coat, and runs into hole in it.] Dar! ain't dat tearable? I neber cut dis coat ob mine, but I t'ink ob de house rent. Lucky it's so low, on account ob de great mystery hangin' ober it—de Trouble dat begins at Nine! De idee of ghosts dat go rollin' spirit-casks up an' down de sta'rs ebery night. Golly, it am mighty singeller! I'm gettin' on my

DE TROUBLE BEGINS AT NINE

muckle about it! Ef it comes agin I'll— [*Bell L. is struck nine times, —speaking one word in each interval between strokes.*] I'll—go—off—some—place—else—for—to—play! Ky! [*Riess startled.—Knock C. D. in F.*] I ain't afeard, but it's drefful! [*Knock E. D.—turns to E.—knock C. D. in F.—turns around—knock L. D.*] De wisitation comes werry mild to-night. I tink I must investigate dis affair. [*Goes up C. cautiously—crash E.—jumps—turns.*] Muss be a strange cat dat's intruding on my pre-mices. [*Crosses to E.*] Puss! puss! pussy! [*Heavy steps, L.—turns still more alarmed.*] Dat can't be de cat, 'less she's got number seven man's boots on! [*Crosses to L. Laugh, C.*] Dat shows dar's some laughter-a-can about! [*Goes up C.; opens door.*] Anybody dar? [*Closes door, when knock is given on it—opens it quickly—an old boot is shown in the doorway as if on a foot of a man standing on his head—falls back and door closes.*] Awaunt, an' quit my sight! Oh! Ugh! [*Leaning on back of chair, trembling—observes his shaking hands.*] Not dat I am afeard! anybody can see I'm shiverlous! [*Knock, gentle, L.—starts.*] Dat's more like. Mus' be Mrs. Ebony from nex' door. [*Knock. L.—stoops for his handkerchief in hat, wipes his face.*] All right, now. Walk in! [*Knock L.*] You may come in! [*Crosses to L. D.—opens it.*]

Ephraim [*Is seen in doorway, squatting down so that PROFESSOR looks over him.*] Yep! [*Riess.*]

Professor [*Staggers back as door closes—to C.*] Bress us an' magnify us! I t'ought de boy grew up out ob de floor. It was on'y a boy—ha, ha! Not dat I was afeard! I'll lay for him! [*Knock L.—twists his handkerchief into a rope—crosses to L. D., stands by the side of it.*] Jess let him call ag'in an' I'll dress him handsomely. [*Business of waiting.*]

Ephraim [*Opens D. in F.*] Nigger, nigger, neber die, black face and chaney eye!

[*PROFESSOR looks up C., but slips in turning—EPHRAIM closes D. in F.*]

Professor Heyah's de trouble all ober ag'in!

[*To C. facing L. so as to watch doors in F. and L.*]

Ephraim [*Opens E. D.*] Whitewash!

[*Closes door.*]

Professor [*Bewildered—turns round and round.*] Dis is too much for me! [*Steps in his hat on floor—stumbles—sinks into chair exhausted.*] Enuff to fat-l-gue a hoss! [*A whistle without.*]

Professor [*Thrusting his arms.*] Go 'way boy, or I'll have you looked up!

[*Puts his hat on with handkerchief streaming out of it.*]

[*EPHRAIM opens E. D., and shies his cap, which knocks off PROFESSOR's hat which rolls to L. with cap.*]

Professor [*Clapping his hand to his head.*] In de name ob wonder, what's dat? [*Frightened, goes L., picks up cap, and, in taking up his*]

hat, runs his hand through the rim; does not know what has become of his hat, looks behind him, etc., for it; at last sees it.] Dis looks more like a seerspan dan a hat! [Puts it on. To c.]

EPHRAIM enters R. D., but stops, seeing PROFESSOR has his cap.

Prof [Sees him. Aside.] Here's de unblushing wagaboue! Let me on'y have my hand on him and I'll—jess see what! [Pretends not to have remarked EPHRAIM, who comes more c.—PROFESSOR suddenly makes a run at EPHRAIM, seizes him and runs him off R. D.;—Trampling R.—PROFESSOR enters R. D., laughing.] He's cracked his head in de scullery. [Terrible crash R.—looks horrified off R.] Bress us! he's gone clean froo de parlor pi-anny! an' dar's de whole winder bust out ob de sashes! [Throws cap off R.] Dar's one consolation! I'm sure to be left in peace now for a while. Let's sit down car-merly. [Attempts to play, seated as before.] Gee! I can't feel de strings! [Plays a melody.—EPHRAIM enters R. D., softly, laughs aside, dances, begins sliding timidly and then takes a run and slides clear across stage.—PROFESSOR intercepts his retreat, and with a furious stamping, grasps EPHRAIM.] Ha, ha! have I caught you here?

Eph [Rubbing his ear.] You caught me by de ear much too rough.

Prof Don't be sassy, boy! What brought you round dis house to kick up sich a bobbery ebery night at nine?

[EPHRAIM laughs; PROFESSOR shakes him.]

Eph I'll tell my mudder on you.

Prof I don't care for your mudder!

Eph Nebber did no hurt.

[Knuckles to his eyes.]

Prof [Dragging him to c.] You've broken all my dishes, and de parlor winders—

Eph No, I neber! You shoved me!

Prof [Appealingly to AUDIENCE.] Here's de way dat dey turn roun' an' charees a respectable citizen dat don't pay his taxes, wid doin' it all!

Eph I was on'y comin' in squietly to hear de moosic!

Prof [Aside.] Oh! dar's somefin' favorable about de lad!

Eph [Dolefully.] I don't hear nuffin' like your playin' since my fader went to sea on de canal-boat.

Pro [Interested.] Is your fader a moosician?

Eph I should tink he was!

Pro Does he play de 'oordeon, de banjo, or de bones?

Eph No, he works on de instrument what plays on de bones!

Pro What eber am dat!

Eph. Used to file meat-saws ! [*Imitates saw-filing, with right fore-finger on left arm.*]

Pro Pshaw !

Eph To be sure he did. I ought ter know !

Pro Whar does you lib when you'se to home ?

Eph Wid my mudder.

Pro Yes—where does your mudder lib ?

Eph Wid me.

Pro [*Angrily.*] Yes. Who is your mudder ?

Eph Miss Persimmons. I'm her good little Ephraim !

Pro She must be sweet on you !

Eph I offen hear her say " Eph—er of thee I am so fondly dreaming ! "

Pro Oh, Ephraim Persimmons ! why, you is de doctor's boy !

Eph No. I leff de doctor.

Pro Sit down and tell us all consarnin' it. [*Seated L. chair.*

[*EPHRAIM takes R. chair*

Pro [*Markedly removes his hat.*] You're sittin' down wid yer cap on, Ephraim.

Ephraim [*Stares, puts his hand up to head.*] Yes, so I is.

Pro Ephraim, behove yourself ! [*Pulls EPHRAIM's cap off, and throws it to R. front.*] So you ain't—don't you get up for your cap !—So you ain't—keep your seat !—So you—Ephraim, [*Holding EPHRAIM down, who makes extravagant efforts to reach his cap with his foot.*] Behove yourself ! So you ain't wid de doctor now ?

Eph No I couldn't do de fust ting he set me at !

Pro What was dat ?

Eph Dar was a lot ob marble images in his room, men on one side women-fokes on de oder, and when I took dem down for to dust 'em, I couldn't put 'em up ag'in !

Pro Was dey so heavy as all dat ?

Eph No, but I couldn't tell de men from de women. De doctor came in, and says he : " You'll neber do for dis perfession. Anybody oughter be able to tell de women from de men from deir habin' de most jaw ! " Wid dat he presented me wid a ploom ! an' I leff !

Pro A plume ? what did you want fedders for ?

Eph Who said fedders ? Dis was a ploomer ?

Pro Oh, I see ! a diploma, a sheet o' paper, or sheepskin——

Eph No ! dis was cowhide, weighed nigh seven poun'——

Pro Eh ?

Eph It was fixed on his hoof, and of all de t'ings rigged in de shape of a crane ! [*One leg on the other knee and the foot swinging.*] An' I was jess fool enuff to get in de way ob it as I was goin' froo de door——

Pro Well !

Eph I neber went back for de balance ob my wages.

Pro So you'se doin' nuffin' now ?

Eph Nuffin'. I want to learn to play like you.

Pro Do you ? To please de young ladies ob color ?

Eph No ! to scar' away de cats from our back-yard of a summer night. What's your prices ?

Pro Terms cash. Five dollars for de free fust lessons. One dollar for de fourth, an' nuffin' for the fifth.

Eph Den I'll begin on de far end, and take de last one now !

Pro You'll find a banjo ober dar.

[*EPHRAIM goes to L. procenium R., and gets mock banjo. Returns to seat. Comic business of imitating PROFESSOR in management of the instrument.*]

Pro How's your voice ?

Eph Pooty well, thank'ee; how's your'n ?

Pro I mean, how high can you reach ?

Eph To de sugar-bowl on de top shelf.

Pro I'm speaking of singing——

Eph Oh !

Pro Are you tenor, soprano, alto, base or what ?

Eph I ain't none ob dem fust fellers—I must be an or-what.

Pro I'm a tenor myself—is your voice like mine ?

Eph I hope not. I t'ought you was an all-toe. [*Looking down.*]

Pro Behove yourself, Ephraim, or you may have reason to believe dat same.

Eph I s'pec' when my breather's in good order, dat I'm a sort o' Windsor soaprano.

Pro Neber mind. I'll soon tell you when I hear you. Now, do, re, mi——

Eph Do what ?

Pro Do, re, mi—dem's de names ob de notes.

Eph Oh, is dey ?

Pro Lis'en.

Dis is do ! [*Chord, and note sung discordantly.*]

[*EPHRAIM laughs.*]

Pro Silence !

Eph [*Laughs.*] On'y fix yer mouf in dat way ag'in !

Pro Do-o-o!

[Chord on banjo.

Eph Ha, ha!

Prof Le's heyah you den!

Eph Would you like to hear me? Mudder says I'm bashful—and want pressin'.

Prof [Softly.] Do, Ephraim!

Eph Say it ag'in!

Prof Do, dat's a good youth, Ephraim!

Eph Sweeter!

Prof [Softly.] Do, Ephraim!

Eph Once more!

Prof [Shouts.] Do, Ephraim!

Eph [Falls off chair.] Oh!

Prof [Looks down on him.] Dat's very good!

Eph [Rises, and resumes seat.] I want to sing songs.

Prof Do you know any?

Eph I know all de songs.

[Business with banjo.

Prof Well, we'll have "Mr. Brown."

Eph Know all de Browns.

Prof We'll commence at once.

[They tune up, etc.

Pro Now, mind. You don't sing till de crescendo passage.

Eph [Stops tuning.] Eh?

Prof Till de crescendo passage.

Eph Where am de grecrecendough sassidge?

Pro Who said anyting ob de kind? All you've got to do is hold your breff till I get free wid my solo!

[Sings.

"WAKE UP, BROWN!"

I'm a berry sassy moko,

An' when I comes to town,

I let off the extra smoke-oh

By knockin' fellers roun';

But las' time it was a loco-

Motive dat butt me down,

An' for weeks I neber spoke-oh

When I hollered—

Eph What was it you hollered?

Prof [Spoken.] What could I holler but—

[Sings.

"Wake up, Brown!"

Both "Wake up, Brown!"

EPHRAIM sings so outrageously out of time and tune and continues the note in a shake, that *PROFESSOR*, after turning and watching him a second, deliberately snatches banjo from him and bonnets him with it. *EPHRAIM* rises. *PROFESSOR* takes chairs to L. *EPHRAIM* going to resume seat, falls. *PROFESSOR* goes off R. D., with his own banjo. *EPHRAIM* follows. Take dis banjo seph off. *PROFESSOR* appears in R. doorway and flours *EPHRAIM* Exit. *EPHRAIM* staggers to G., making faces, and to L. D. Jess for dat—jess for dat, ebery night de Trouble begins at Nine! [Exit, etc.]

THE END.

THE FAITH CURE

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY
GEORGE H. COES

THE DAIRY-MAIDS' FESTIVAL.

BETTY, *etc.* Our cheeks are as red as a rose,

CHORUS. Rose, rose,

BETTY, *etc.* And though we're not decked in fine clothes,

CHORUS. Clothes, clothes,

We're all of us pretty, and some of us witty,
And happy as happy can be.

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, *etc.*

THE JERSEY LILY.

(AIR. — "*Read the Answer in the Stars.*")

See, the Jersey Lily comes!

Moving proudly from afar;

See, the Jersey Lily comes!

(Repeat). Read your answer in the star.



THE FAITH CURE.

Scene I.—*Wood in 4. Set house L. 3 E. ; set tree R. 3 E. ; set rock, R. C. at back. PAT and BRIDGET discovered.*

Bridget. I want to spake to you, Pat O'Hoolahan. I can't carry on this unhappy life any longer wid yees this way. I'm starving, faith I am.

Pat. What unhappy life are ye spakin' about? Where will yees find another husband like meself? Sure, don't I bring ye home all the money I earn, barrin' the small amount I spend for a wee drop of whisky?

Bridget. Bad luck to your red head. Divil a bit of bread and meat have we had in the house these two days.

Pat. Arrah, sure you'd be sick if ye ate any more. I don't want to give ye the fashion of ateing every day.

Bridget. By me sowl, if ye don't support me as a lady should be, I'll be after beating the divil out of ye, so I will.

Pat. Howld yer tongue, Bridget, and have a little more decency in yees, for your husband's sake.

Bridget. Decency, is it? After ye spint all my solid goold, and even sowld my jewelry, what me father and mother left me, when we got married.

Pat. Sowld yer jewelry! Ha, ha! Shure sich ould stuff as that wouldn't bring enough to keep a toad alive for a week. You could buy a better set at the dollar store for fifty cents.

Bridget (angry). Bad luck to ye, ye dirty blackguard, but I'll bate yer two eyes into one, ye spalpeen.

[Takes club and beats him.]

Pat. Do you mean that? By my sowl, I'll give you a rap that'll do you good. I'll make you dance a polkay. Take that.

[Hits her and she falls.]

Bridget. Och, murther, murther! I'm kilt intirely. Oh! wirra, wirra!

Pat. That's a persuader for you, any way. That's the way to tame your wives. Get up out o' that and go into the house. Now I'm going to split some wood, and I want you to have me

dinner all ready when I come back, or bedad I'll give ye the rest of a good beating, so I will. [Exit, L. 1 E.]

Bridget. Go on, the ould thief of the world. Bad luck to ye, but I'll have satisfaction of you yet, d'ye mind.

Enter DICK and BOB, R. H. 2 E.

Dick. I say, Bob, we've undertook a very hard job to find a doctor that'll cure old Warren's daughter.

Bob. We must do our best, and go all over the state to serve Mr. Warren; and if we are successful, we will be well paid for it.

Bridget (to herself). If I could only be revenged on that blackguard, Pat O'Hoolahan.

Dick (sees BRIDGET). Hello, who is that woman crying yonder?

Bridget. I will never rest aisy till I get me revenge on that son of a say cook.

Dick (goes to her). Good-morning, ma'am.

Bridget. Top of the mornin' to yees both.

Bob. Why are you sad, my good woman?

Bridget (crying). Shure, an' I have a right to be sad, a poor woman who has no money and nothing to eat in the house, and me ould man just after beating me till I am kilt intirely, so I am.

Bob. That's too bad, Dick. She's like a good many other poor people in this country. (*Gives her money.*) Here, good woman, here's a little money for you.

Bridget. Thank ye, sir. Long life to yees both, and my blessings go wid you. But what are ye doing out hereabouts?

Dick. We are in search of a good physician.

Bridget. Shure, but the both of ye look fine and hearty.

Dick. Oh, we don't want him for ourselves, but our massa's daughter has lost her power of speech suddenly, and we're looking for a good boctor. We heard there was one about here somewhere.

Bridget (aside). Be my oath, I have an opportunity now for my revenge. (*Aloud.*) Gentlemen, if ye want a good physician, we have one close by here. He has no equal in the world.

Dick. Is dat so? Where can we find him?

Bridget. Howld on a bit. (*Looks off L. 2 E.*) He was here beyant a while ago. Oh, there he is. See him splitting wood over there?

Bob. What, a doctor splitting wood?

Bridget. You see, sir, that's the way he enjoys himself. He is a queer man, and I tell ye what ye must do wid him. He niver will come wid ye unless ye beat the divil out of him and

take him by force ; that's the way we all do wid him when we want his services—beat him good, and he'll go wid ye like a lamb.

Dick. Well, I'm not surprised. Bob, you know these talented men are often very eccentric, and have queer notions sometimes.

Bob. But it's rather rough to treat a physician with a stick.

Bridget. Yis, I know that. Hs is very iccentric, but ye must beat him, and ye'll see wonders from him.

Dick. What's his name ?

Bridget. Dr. Patrick O'Hoolahan, sir.

Bob. Is he really a good doctor ?

Bridget. Never a better one in this country. He is wonderful, sir. Listen to me now. Six months ago a woman was given up by all the doctors, and all the relations were preparing for the funeral, sir, when two of her friends came for Doctor O'Hoolahan, sir, and took him and beat him, and brought him to the sick woman ; and as soon as he saw her, he put a drop of a certain liquor in her mouth, and made her get up, and one hour after she wint and washed clothes jist the same as if she never was sick.

Bob. My goodness, Dick, he ain't a man, he must be a magician.

Bridget. Oh, that's nothin', sir. True for me, about three weeks ago a boy about four years old fell from the top of the bell tower on St. Patrick's Church, and he broke his head and his arms and his legs, and they called that doctor to him, sir, and as usual they—you know what I mean—and when he see the boy, he began to rub some ointment on him from head to foot, and in a few minutes, would you believe me, sir, the boy began to run about the house like a whipping top, better than ever, sir.

Dick. Just the man we want.

Bob. Just the man we're looking for. Where is he ?

Bridget. There he is over there beyant. Now I'm going into the house ; but don't ye tell him I told you to beat him. Give it to him good, or he won't go wid yees at all, at all.

Dick. All right ; much obliged to you, ma'am.

[Exit DICK and BOB, L. 2 E.

Bridget. Good-day, gintlemen. Oh, but I'll be revinged on Pat O'Hoolahan, any way.

[Exit in house.

Scene II.—Wood in I.

Enter DICK and BOB, L. 1 E.

Dick. I say, Bob, how's your muscle ?

Bob. Oh, I feel as strong as a lion. We can get away with him easy enough. There he comes ; let's stand behind this tree.

[Stand aside.

Enter PAT, talking to himself.

Pat. Now I must try and make up wid the ould woman. According to the ancient and modern philosophy, it requires a good dose of mash-tick-a-ment-tum.

Dick. Say, Bob, he speaks Latin.

Bob. You bet he's a scientific man.

Pat. Bekase as I am her——

[DICK and BOB come forward.

Dick. Good-mornin', sir.

[Bows to PAT.

Pat. Good-mornin' to yees. (*Aside.*) Who the divil are those fellows, anyway. I don't know.

Bob. Your most obedient servants, sir.

Pat. How do ye do? (*Aside.*) Look at 'em, bobbing up and down.

Dick. If I'm not mistaken, I am speaking to Dr. Patrick O'Hoolahan.

Pat. Pat O'Hoolahan without the Dr.

Dick. Don't think it strange that we are in search of you, sir.

Bob. Such a great man as you are, sir, is very much needed.

Dick. We have heard already of your wonderfulness.

Pat. Who could say the reverse? Nobody can cut and split wood like meself.

Bob. Oh, yes, we know you.

Pat. Do ye? Well, I'm glad o' that, and who am I?

Dick (*to BOB*). See, he's trying to play off on us.

Bob. Why, you have the reputation of being the greatest physician in the United States, France, England, Italy, Hungary, and so on.

Pat. Oh, yis, I am hungry, shure enough; but as a physician you have made a mistake. No, sir, I never was a doctor in my life.

Dick. Oh, yes, you are, but you won't own it.

Pat (*getting angry*). I tell you I am not.

Bob (*to DICK*). Dick, it's no use, we've got to club him.

Dick. Do not compel us to use violence, Doctor.

Bob. Yes, we don't want to beat you to make you go.

Pat. Bate me to make me go! What the divil ails yees? Are ye crazy or mad? Go 'long wid yees, and don't be after makin' a fool of me. What's the matter wid yees anyway?

Dick. Ain't you a physician?

Pat. No, bad luck to ye. No, I'm no doctor.

[DICK and BOB beat him until he confesses that he is a doctor.

Dick. Ain't you a doctor?

Pat. Oh, murther, yis. I'm anything you want.

Bob. It's too bad to be obliged to beat a doctor with clubs dat way, before we can get him to go with us.

Pat. Oh, Holy Mother of Moses ! First they bate me, and thin say it's too bad. Who told you I was a doctor ?

Dick. That lady that everybody thought was dead, and you cured her in a minute.

Pat (*surprised*). And is it *me* that cured her ?

Dick. Yes, you. And that boy that fell from the steeple of the church, and was mashed to jelly, and you cured him with your wonderful ointment in no time at all.

Pat (*aside*). They must be drunk or crazy. (*Aloud.*) Gentlemen, by my sowl, I don't know anything about them.

Bob (*beats him good*). Yes, you do.

Pat. Of course I do. I was a great doctor, and I don't know anything at all about it. But I'm ready to do anything ye want. What will I have to do ?

Dick. Come with us. We will take you to a fine lady who has just lost her power of speech.

Pat. And is she a female ?

Dick. Yes, certainly she is.

Pat. And she don't spake ?

Dick. Not at all.

Pat. Why don't you send her to Barnum ?

Dick. Come, sir, remember, if you cure this young lady, your fortune is made.

Pat. Oh, of course, I'll cure her. Where there's money in the case, I'm a doctor ; but howld on, I can't go in these ould clothes.

Dick. Oh, come with us ; we've no time to lose. We will provide you with everything.

Pat. Oh, yis ; all right. If that's the case, I'm wid ye. And where's the place ye'll be after takin' me to ? And is it fashionable to beat the doctors ?

Dick. Oh, sometimes we have to lick 'em.

Pat. Well, you understand your business anyway. Well, let's go and see the patient. (*Aside.*) By the verge of my oath, but I'll be even wid yees.

[*Exeunt* PAT, BOB, and DICK, R. H. I E.]

Scene III.—*Chamber in 3 ; parlor in the house of MR. WARREN, furnished well. MR. WARREN discovered seated at table.*

Mr. W. Oh, dear, I am nearly frantic with grief. My poor daughter, Lizzie, my only child, to lose her speech at such an early age—the tongue, the most important organ, to be stopped ! What can I do ? Is there no doctor that can cure her ? I sup-

pose—yes—it must be so—my refusal to allow her to marry Mr. White has produced this infirmity ; but I did what I thought was for the best. If she had only consented to marry Mr. Johnson. 'Tis true he is rather old, but he is wealthy.

Enter BOB *and* DICK, R. H.

Dick. Good news, Mr. Warren ; cheer up, we've found a doctor that'll cure your daughter, sure.

Mr. W. Who is he, Dick ?

Dick. He is the most wonderful doctor in the world.

Mr. W. Where is he ?

Dick. In de other room ; will I call him in here ?

Mr. W. Certainly, immediately.

Dick. Here he is. Come in, Doctor.

Enter PAT.

Pat (*to* MR. W.). Good-mornin' to your Paternal Paternity. I have the honor to present meself—Mr. Patrick O'Hoolahan, Surgeon, Physician, and Wood-Cutter, and I am proud to have the honor of serving a respectable old gentleman like yourself.

Mr. W. What ! Surgeon, Physician, and Wood-Cutter ?

Pat (*aside*). What the divil am I saying ? (*Aloud.*) Certainly, sir, that is the name which Mercurious used to give me.

Mr. W. Won't you explain yourself better ?

Pat (*aside*). How the divil can I explain myself better when I can't understand it myself ?

Dick. Mr. Warren, the doctor is very eccentric, but he'll cure your daughter, sure.

Mr. W. Doctor, my daughter has been suddenly taken by an unfortunate disease.

Pat. I am sorry that it is only your daughter. I would like to see ye also caught by some mortal disease, to show the effect of my Prescribed Prescriptions.

Mr. W. Oh, I thank you for your kindness.

Pat. Never a word of thanks. Be my conscience, I am a man, sir, who always tries to help friends out of trouble, bad luck to the bateing I got.

Mr. W. I understand you now—you are a good-humored man, and I only hope you will succeed in curing my daughter. Will you permit me to call her ?

Pat. To be shure I will. Be careful you don't break your neck in running after her.

Mr. W. (*is going*). What a mirthful doctor. Oh, here she comes. (**Enter** MISS W., R. H. & E.) Doctor, this is my only child, and if I should lose her, I should go crazy.

Pat (*aside*). Be my sowl, but she looks healthier than meself

(*Aloud.*) Don't be afraid. You'll not lose her. I will give her some medicine that will finish her at once. (MISS W. *sits at table*; PAT *sits beside her.*) Well, miss, look at me—look at your doctor. Ah, ha, my dear, ye will continue to be sick if ye don't get well. [*She laughs.*]

Mr. W. Very good, Doctor; you've made her laugh.

Pat. To be shure she laughs. You see, when the patient laughs, it is a sure sign that—that—she don't cry, d'ye mind. Now tell me, miss, what is your disease?

Miss W. A, E, I, O, U. [*Explaining the sorrow of her heart.*]

Pat. Oh, yis; in this case, sir, the disease is half al-far-bet, sir. Does your daughter speak Greek?

Mr. W. Pardon me, Doctor, she does not speak at all.

Pat. Oh, yis, of coorse she can't speak; but what was the cause of her not spakin'?

Mr. W. You see she wanted to marry a miserable fellow, and I was opposed to it.

Pat. You were wrong, sir, to do that same; so if you would save your daughtef, consint to the match.

Mr. W. I don't believe he will have her, now she has lost her tongue.

Pat. No, sir—it's the revarse to that. A wife widout a tongue is a blessing. Tell me, miss, is your disease painful?

Miss W. Oh! Oh!

Mr. W. Very sharp sometimes.

Pat. Con-sid-er-rat-tum, Uni-ver-tum. And do you feel a sort of a shakin'?

Miss W. Eh, eh!

Mr. W. Frequently, sir.

Pat. The symptoms couldn't be better. Give me your pulse. (*Bus.*) Now, sir, I understand the terrible disease of your daughter.

Mr. W. (*anxious*). What is it? Doctor, speak.

Pat. Your daughter—your daughter——

Mr. W. Well, my daughter——

Pat. Your daughter is—dumb.

Mr. W. I am aware of that.

Pat. But it is one of those cases of symptoms that they don't spake. A skilful doctor understands the disease like bummers do Irish and Scotch whisky. The disease comes from a—well, suppose now ye break the spring of a watch; will the watch go any more?

Mr. W. Certainly not.

Pat. Well, this is the case wid your daughter. The spring of her tongue is broke, and by mending the spring she will be

able to speak without dubi-ta-tion-um or hes-i-ta-shun-um. Give her plenty of—— Do you understand Latin?

Mr. W. I do not.

Pat. You don't understand Fi-ko-to-gug-tum-bi-tur? Well, give her plenty of bread and wine, and I'll go bail she'll talk more than a criminal lawyer before two days.

Mr. W. Do you really think so, Doctor?

Pat. To be shure I do. Now, miss, you had better go to your room and prepare yourself to take your medicine.

Mr. W. (*offers purse*). For the present, Doctor, take this.

Pat. No, no, sir.

Mr. W. Oh, I beg of you to accept it.

Pat. I will obey. I am going now to the apothecary's to order Red-de-viv-you-bus, or three thousand pills; and if she don't be cured, she will surely die. Good-bye to you. (*Aside.*) The first saloon I come to I'll spend the amount of my first visit and go home rowling drunk, so I will. Oh, look at me now for a doctor!

[*Exit, L. H. I R.*

Mr. W. My child, you can go to your room. Dick, you go for the bread and wine; Bob, you stay here—I might want you. Oh, if that Dr. O'Hoolahan succeeds in curing my child, I will erect a marble monument to his memory.

[*Exit R. H.*

Dick. If I had a wife, I would ask the doctor to give her medicine to stop her tongue, and not keep it a going.

Bob. My golly! how Miss Warren will make up for lost time when she does speak again.

[*Exit DICK; BOB goes to work dusting the furniture as scene closes in.*

Scene IV.—Street in 1.

Enter MR. WHITE, R. H.

White. Old Mr. Warren has called a doctor to cure the pretended sudden disease of his daughter. Now, if I could only meet the doctor and persuade him to help me elude the vigilance of her father, I would be all right. Hello, here comes the doctor from her house now.

Enter PAT, L. H., looking off L.

Pat. I know, ye have a sore chest. Put a poultice of rhubarb on your nose. Oh, by my sowl, I can't walk a step now. Everybody is after me. If I continue this way, the undertakers will do a good business, anyway.

White. Ah, Doctor, I want you to help me. I am in your hands.

Pat. Congress Water—Congress Water, and plenty of it. I can see by yer face ye need plenty of it.

White. No, Doctor, I am not sick.

Pat. And what the divil d'ye come after a doctor if ye are well? Go 'long out o' that.

White. Doctor, you are the only man that can cure me—you must know that I'm in love.

Pat. I will write ye a prescription to cure you of love, anyway, and you'll think no more of it.

White. No, no; I want you to help me obtain the object which I love.

Pat (*aside*). This is progressing. From a doctor I am advanced to match-making. (*Aloud.*) I am astonished at ye, sir. And is this the way to profane me medicinabus medicine. Oh, thou Esculpius, do ye hear him and don't throw a half a ton of sarsaparilla in his face?

White. But Esculapius is dead; he cannot hear you.

Pat. Us professors, we have the faculty to spake with the dead and be bruised by the living. If ye want to have the same privilege, come under my attendance, and I will soon send ye to the other world to spake with them.

White. Let me explain. You must know that I love old Mr. Warren's daughter Lizzie. She loves me also. She is pretending to be dumb and sick to avoid marrying an old man her father chose for her. Now, you must try and get me into the house to speak to her. The compensation for your trouble is this fifty-dollar note.

Pat. My dear sir, this Ointmentation with us doctors has more effect than Mercury. I will help you—ye are a gentlemine, and ye deserve my friendship. Give me that note.

White (*gives him note*). Now tell me the way you intend doing this.

Pat. My dear sir, who do you think I am?

White. A celebrated physician, of course.

Pat. Ye are mistaken, sir. I am *no* doctor, true for me; I am a poor wood-cutter. While I was in the woods cutting wood, two divils—the waiters of Mr. Warren—armed with two stout clubs, bate me and took me by force. 'Pon my soul, they bate me until I am black and blue all over. Well, sir, they took me and presented me to Mr. Warren as a doctor.

White. Well, then, how can you help me?

Pat. Does the ould divil know ye?

White. He only knows me by name.

Pat. All right! I'll tell ye how to do it. Dress yourself up like an apothecary, and take a pot of pills as if it was medicine I ordered, and go to the house and inquire for Doctor O'Hoolahan. I will fix the rest. I promise ye in less than a month ye will be married. But don't you let them find out I am a wood-cutter,

otherwise the doctor has to put himself under the care of the surgeon with his head broke.

White. Oh, don't you be afraid of that. If I succeed I will give you double the amount.

Pat. Go and disguise yerself. Good-bye. By the powers of old Moll Kenny's cat, but I have the money in my pocket.

[**Exit** PAT and MR. WHITE.]

Scene V.—Same as Scene 3.

Mr. W. (*discovered, calls*). Bob! Dick! Here, quick. Oh, I'm a ruined man. [**Enters** R. H. I E.]

Dick. Here I am, massa.

Mr. W. My daughter is getting worse. Run for the doctor. She may die at any moment. Tell the doctor to come right away. [**DICK** *is about to go*.]

Pat (*outside*). You've got the toothache. Arrah, sure and pull all your teeth out, and I'll go bail ye'll never suffer wid the toothache any more.

Enter PAT, R.

Mr. W. Oh, Doctor, I am in despair.

Pat (*aside*). I wish you was in Botany Bay. (*Aloud.*) Ye are wrong. Be happy and gay—don't look into the future.

Mr. W. My daughter is worse.

Pat. So much the better. It shows that my medicine has produced the effect.

Mr. W. But I'm afraid she is going to die.

Pat. Wait until she is to the extreme, and then I will show you who I am.

Mr. W. (*looks R.*). Who is that coming in here?

Pat (*sees WHITE, R. I E.*). Oh, that is the apothecary's clerk, come with my medicine. (*Aside.*) Bedad, but he's in a hurry. Go on, Mr. Warren, go and get your daughter, bed and all, if necessary.

Enter WHITE.

Mr. W. Dick, see if my daughter can come in here.

[**Exit** DICK, L.]

Pat. I will not only cure your daughter, but I would like to see ye attacted with an ap-po-plec-tic fit, or any other sickness of the same character—just to show you my ability.

White. Doctor, here is your medicine you ordered. Since I have been in the profession I have never composed such a difficult prescription.

Pat (*to MR. WARREN*). Take the half of the bottle if you want your daughter well cured.

THE FAITH CURE.

Mr. W. What is it?

Pat. That medicine, sir, is Marry-bus balsam.

Mr. W. How is it that my daughter is ill, and the medicine?

Pat. That is the peculiarity of me medicine.

Enter DICK and MISS W., L.

Mr. W. Ah, how do you feel now, my daughter?

Miss W. A. U.

Mr. W. A little better, eh? I'm glad to hear it.

Pat. Magnum Bonum. E. Unibus Pluribus. Tell your servants to retire, and I will perform an operation on your daughter.

Mr. W. To perform an operation.

Pat. Obey the doctor. (*MR. W. waves the hand.*) Now, Mr. Apothecary, of the short neck, while Warren the disease of his daughter, ye sit beside her, greets administer to her all of the contents in this bottle, and don't lose none of it.

White. I will employ all my attention.

Mr. W. Doctor, I would like to see how you give her the medicine.

Pat. Ye are mistaken, Papa. Ye must not come near her. Look here; come and sit by me, and I will give you everything. (*PAT takes chairs and places one behind his back to WHITE. He then sits facing MR. W. and looks on.*) *WHITE and MISS W. make some questions and answers are made to the students, and the students to the question if a man is more—more—curable than the female is more curable than the male—some others they deny—and still others affirm.* No, no. (*MR. W. tries to look towards MISS W.; PAT looks at me, now.*) The woman, as far, perhaps, as like yer daughter. She would if she could, but she can't. At the moment of the act, supposing you were there.

Miss W. Certainly not, my dear, I will never consent.

Mr. W. What's that? As I live, my daughter is a wise and learned man!

Pat. The medicine has produced the effect you wished.

Miss W. Yes, dear father, I have recovered again, to ask you that Mr. White shall be my husband.

Mr. W. But—

Miss W. I will never consent to marry a man who is not a White or death. I am decided!

Mr. W. Oh, what a tongue! Doctor, the medicine has been too powerful. Give her something else to make her hold her tongue.

Pat. I can't do that; but I can give ye some medicine that will make you deaf, and ye can't hear what she says.

Mr. W. Oh, no, doctor, try and do something—

Pat. Don't be afraid; your daughter must have her way or she'll go crazy. She must be under the care of the apothecary by my instructions. Now I will write another prescription for her to take, and she will be well until she gets sick again. Now, Mr. Apothecary, sit at the table and write. Recipe—Four ounces of Gum-marry-bus Powder.

Mr. W. What is this powder, Doctor?

Pat. A certain powder that will cure your daughter. Two ounces of Pulverized Matrimorialis—and mix them well. Now, take the young lady in the garden—she requires a great deal of open air.

[WHITE is about to lead MISS W. away when BRIDGET appears outside; PAT gets behind MR. W.]

Bridget. Oh, botheration! What trouble I had to find this house.

Pat. Och! Blood an' 'ouns—but that's my wife. The storm is nearer now.

Enter BRIDGET, L. H. I E.

Bridget. There you are, you thief of the world. Look at him—dressed up there like a doctor. Oh, you decaver!

Pat. Silence! Ye divil! [Shakes fist at her.]

Bridget. Shure, the likes of you ought to be ashamed of yourself—to be imposing on these good people.

Mr. W. Here, cease your impertinence—insulting the most celebrated physician on the face of the earth.

Pat (*aside*). Be me sowl, if the earth goes on like this, I'll soon be seven feet under ground.

Bridget. A physician, is he? This is my husband. Oh, my poor back; bad luck to his sowl, I feel it already.

Mr. W. Do you know this woman, Doctor?

Pat. Certainly I know her. I blistered her shoulders this morning to cure a pain in her side. (*To BRIDGET.*) Go 'long out o' that, or I'll soon have my shoulders blistered.

Bridget. Howld on, my fine fellar. Mr. Warren, I towld you before this man is Pat O'Hoolahan, my husband, a wood-cutter by trade, and he's no doctor, nor never was a doctor, either.

Mr. W. A wood-cutter?

Miss W. and White. We're lost.

[Go out R. H. 2 E.]

Pat. Don't listen to her—she is crazy. She run away from a lunatic asylum yesterday.

Mr. W. (*to BRIDGET*). Get out of my house, you crazy wretch!

Enter DICK, hurriedly.

Dick. Massa Warren! Massa Warren!

Mr. W. Well, what's the matter now?

Dick. Dat potecary what was here was no potecary at all. Dat is Mr. White, and he has gone off wid your daughter.

Mr. W. Oh, what rascality is this?

Bridget. Didn't I tell you he was no doctor?

Mr. W. Oh, you scoundrel, is that the way to betray an old man like me? Dick! Go and call a policeman. I'll have you hung before night.

Bridget. Oh, my poor Pat.

Pat. May the divil choke you!

Enter WHITE and MISS W. and kneel at MR. W.'s feet.

Miss W. My dear father, forgive us this time, and we'll never do so again.

White. Be magnanimous, Mr. Warren; your severity induced me to act in this manner. My birth is not inferior to yours, and I hope you will consent to our union.

Mr. W. What shall I say? Arise, I forgive you. (*To PAT.*) But you, sir, I'll have you hung.

Pat. Oh, Mr. Warren, take pity on poor Pat O'Hoolahan.

White. Mr. Warren, I beg of you to pardon him. He is guilty on my account alone.

Pat. Oh, yes, do forgive me, sir.

Mr. W. On condition you'll never let me see you again, you rascal.

Bridget (*crying*). Och, musha, bad luck to me. I thought I would be a widow, but I'm disappointed.

Pat. That is the wife's love in our day.

Mr. W. Never mind. Shake hands and be happy.

White. Lizzie, you are mine.

Miss W. United forever.

White. Pat and Bridget, I want to make you both happy. (*Gives purse to each.*) But you must give us proof that you'll never fight again.

Pat and Bridget. What shall we do?

White. Give us a real good Irish jig.

[*PAT and BRIDGET both dance a regular Irish reel, and work it up very lively.*]

CLOSE IN OR CURTAIN.

THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE

A Negro Act in One Scene

ARRANGED BY

GÉORGE H. COES

AS PLAYED BY SCHOOLCRAFT AND COES

CHARACTERS.

LIVINGSTON DUPLEX, *the proprietor.* (*Either black or white.*)

STEVE SMITHERS, *after a situation.* (*Black.*)

JANE ANN O'HOOLOHAN, *an Irishwoman.*

PROPERTIES.

Cane for Duplex. Money for Smithers and O'Hoolahan, two five-dollar bills.
A writing-desk. Books, papers, an ink-stand, and a quill pen. Two chairs.
Bulletin-board to stand r. of stage, with advertisements on it.

THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE.

SCENE. — *An interior. DUPLEX discovered.*

DUPLEX. Well, I'm the most unfortunate individual in the world. Everything seems to turn against me. No matter what I do, or which way I turn, or what kind of business I get into, I fail in everything. Now, first I was a clerk in a lawyer's office. He didn't have clients enough to pay for a bowl of soup. Then I tried commercial business. Had no credit, and had to drop that. Tried politics. Attempted to make a speech, when I got on the wrong stump and they raised me. Then I was a bounty jumper. Well, I done well at that until I took a partner, and he jumped off with the funds, and that left me broke again. Now, as a last resort, I had three dollars in my pockets this morning. I got my breakfast, which cost me fifty cents, bought me a Havana cigar, discussed that, and walked down street, found this room to let, rented it, and opened an Intelligence Office; and now if I can get a few applicants that are fools enough to let me have ten or fifteen dollars, I will leave this country and go to New Jersey, or some other foreign clime. Well, now I'll get to work writing, and see if I can catch somebody.

(*Goes and sits at desk, as enter STEVE SMITHERS, R. H.*)

SMITHERS. How do you do, boss?

DUP. (*advancing*). How are you, sir?

SMI. I come here to see if I could get a situation.

DUP. What kind of a situation would you like to have?

SMI. Well, I'd like to be a teller in some bank.

DUP. (*looks at him*). I couldn't get you a situation as teller in a bank, but I might get you a situation as digger in a sand-bank.

SMI. Well, no, dat don't suit me. I want a place where I can handle money.

DUP. Ah, I see! I can get you a situation as bar-keeper. Did you ever tend bar in this city?

SMI. No, sir; I never was here before.

DUP. Could you tend bar? Do you understand that business? I can get you a good situation.

SMI. Well, look here, boss, I don't mind tending bar, but will you guarantee dat after I've been to work a year, I'll own the place? I know lots of fellows dat has bought out dere proprietors in less time dan dat.

DUP. No, I couldn't guarantee you anything. If you're smart enough at the end of the year to own the place, why you are a lucky fellow. You'll have to rely on your ability for that.

SMI. Well, give me de situation. I'll try it, anyhow.

DUP. Before proceeding any farther in this business, you know my terms.

SMI. What, Mike Terms, the blacksmith —

DUP. No, no — my price.

SMI. Oh, Ned Price, the boxer. Yes, I know him.

DUP. No, no, no; you don't understand me. I mean my charges.

SMI. Oh, yes; how much do you get for the situation?

DUP. Two dollars — invariably in advance.

SMI. Two dollars in advance — previous?

DUP. I get you the situation for two dollars.

SMI. (*feels all his pockets for money*). I got a five dollar bill here somewhere. Ah, here it is. There!

DUP. (*takes it*). Five dollars — ah, yes — that's right. What's your name, sir? (*Puts money in pocket.*)

SMI. Steve Smithers.

DUP. Come here and I'll book you. (*Goes to desk; business of SMITHERS dropping his hat from his head on the paper DUPLEX is writing on, and picking up DUPLEX'S hat and putting it on his head, DUPLEX remonstrating. This is kept up two or three times, when DUPLEX rises and folds up the piece of paper he has written on and advances to front; SMITHERS follows.*) There, young man, you take this piece of paper. You know where Broadway is?

SMI. Let me see, dat runs along de front of dis house.

DUP. Yes. You take this piece of paper and go up Broadway until you come to Canal Street, then take the Eighth Avenue car and go to 125th Street, turn to your right, and take the first saloon on your left. Walk right in and hand that note to the man behind the bar.

SMI. (*takes paper and looks at it, suspicious*). Go up Broadway and jump in the canal, and —

DUP. No, no; you misunderstand me. Go up Broadway to Canal Street, take the Eighth Avenue car, go to 125th Street, turn to your right, first saloon on your left, walk right in, and give that note to the man behind the bar.

SMI. (*starts to go, turns back*). Say, I give you five dollars just now, and I want my change. You forgot it, didn't you?

DUP. That's so. Let me see, you want three dollars, don't you?

SMI. Yes, sir.

DUP. Well, upon my word, I have no small bills. Say, won't you be kind enough to stop in when you come back, and I'll hand it to you.

SMI. No, I can carry it myself. Give me the three dollars.

DUP. My dear fellow, it's much safer in my pocket. Besides, I haven't any small bills.

SMI. It's safe in my pocket; besides, I may want to use some of it 'fore I get back. Give me three dollars.

DUP. Don't you understand? I've got your money in my pocket, and it's much safer with me. You see, there's so many thieves, garroters, burglars, pickpockets, and refreshments on the road, you might get robbed. So you stop in when you come back and I'll give you your money.

SMI. Yes, if dem fellows rob me and find out I've got nothing, dey'll kill me.

DUP. (*pushes him towards R.*). No, they will not. Now you go on, and stop in as you come back.

SMI. (*comes back*). Say, look here, give me ten cents to ride up in the cars.

DUP. My dear fellow, you don't want a copper. You get aboard the cars and mention my name to the conductor, and he'll take you anywhere you want to go.

SMI. Mention your name?

DUP. Yes.

SMI. What's your name?

DUP. Duplex.

SMI. Well, look here, Mr. Duplex, don't forget dem three dollars. (*Exit grumbling.*)

DUP. (*sits at desk*). There, I've sent him far enough away. Now if I can catch one more for a five dollar bill, I leave this.

JANE ANN O'HOOLOHAN (*outside, R.*). That's a good boy, Mike. Here's a couple of pennies for you. Now go home and tell your mother to wash your feet. (*Enter slowly, bowing to DUPLEX, who rises and comes forward.*) How do you do, boss?

DUP. (*with a goose quill behind his ear; as he bows it sticks in her face*). How are you, madam? What is your business with me?

JANE (*trying to brush something off her face*). There was a friend of mine living in the second ward told me there was an Intelligence Office just opened at No. 16 Broadway, and I come for a situation. Is this the place?

DUP. This is the place, madam. What kind of a situation would you like to have? (*Jabs the quill in her face again; she brushes it away as before.*)

JANE. Well, boss, I don't know. I think I'd like a situation as conductor on the horse railway cars.

DUP. My dear madam, we have no female conductors on the horse-cars. (*Jabs again; she goes to the front brushing her face, saying, "Thunder and ounds, how thick the mosquitoes are!"*)

JANE (*comes back again*). No?

DUP. No!

JANE. Well, boss, I'll go as a driver, then.

DUP. My dear madam, we have no female conductors and drivers on the cars. (*Jabs her again; she discovers the quill and winks at audience.*)

JANE. No? Well, boss, I don't care what it is as long as I get a situation where I can earn an honest penny.

DUP. Now, madam, I might get you a situation as nurse. (*Jabs her again; she dodges and winks at audience.*) Do you understand taking care of children? (*Jabs her again; she slaps his face, and he retreats to L. H.; she follows.*)

JANE (*very mad and blustering*). Take that, you blackguard, you!

DUP. How dare you strike me!

JANE. How dare I, is it? If you make me mad, I'd give you a kick up on the forehead.

DUP. I never met with such treatment in the whole course of my life, madam. What do you mean by —

JANE (*menacingly*). What do I mean, is it? If you make me mad, I'll give you a rap on the head that'll do you good.

DUP. She's a perfect Hottentot. I'll go for the police and have her arrested for assault and battery.

JANE (*threateningly*). I'd give you a kick up in the wrist, you devil you. You'll have me arrested! I'll show you.

DUP. How dare you strike me in that manner?

JANE. How dare I, is it? It's aisy for you to be standing there a nodding and prodding and sticking that thing into my eye.

DUP. (*discovers his quill in centre of stage, and finds that it has been the cause of the disturbance; picks up quill and turns to JANE*). My dear madam, I beg ten thousand pardons. I was not aware I had this behind my ear.

JANE (*cooling*). You beg my pardon, is it? Well, I want you to leave off your little Jackeen Kadido tricks wid me, and if you have a situation for me, give it to me; if not, I'll go out.

DUP. (*advances to her apparently afraid*). My price is two dollars, invariably in advance.

JANE (*jumps towards him*). What's that?

DUP. (*frightened*). I say my price is two dollars, invariably in advance.

JANE. What's the matter with you? Have you the St. Anthony's dance?

DUP. No, madam, I have not. I assure you. You hit me such a powerful blow on my ear it rings like a bell all the time.

JANE. Well, come here to me, and don't be foolin' wid me. I have a five dollar bill here in the heel of my fist, what I saved from my last month's wages. (*Takes it out and opens it.*)

DUP. (*takes it and puts it in his pocket*). Yes, so it is; that's right.

JANE (*aside*). Look at him grab it!

DUP. What's your name, madam?

JANE. My name, is it?

DUP. Yes.

JANE. Well, sir, my name is Jané Ann O'Hoolahan.

DUP. I beg your pardon.

JANE. My name?

DUP. Yes.

JANE. Jane Ann O'Hoolahan.

DUP. (*goes to desk*). Come here and I'll book you.

JANE (*to audience*). The big thief. He looks like a pair of tongs.

DUP. Let me see, madam. How do you spell your name?

JANE (*astonished*). And can't you spell it?

DUP. No, I cannot.

JANE. A smart man you are to be keeping an intelligence office, and can't spell a lady's name.

DUP. You see, madam, your name is very peculiar. I never heard it before, so you'll be kind enough to spell it.

JANE. Well, boss, you write it down, and I'll spell it for you.

DUP. All right.

JANE. Are you ready, boss?

DUP. Yes.

JANE. Well! J—a—jay, h—a—Jahanna.

DUP. (*writes*). Johanna!

JANE. O—ho—h—o—ho, — ho—ho—ho—ho—hoolagan.

DUP. All right. Let me see, madam, where are you from?

JANE. Where am I from, is it?

DUP. Yes.

JANE. Well, sir, I am from the city of Cin—shin—nat—ta—ha.

DUP. From where?

JANE. I say I am from the city of Cin—shin—nat—ta—er.

DUP. Oh, Cincinnati. Let me see—that's in the State of Pennsylvania, is it not?

JANE. Cinshinnater in the State of Pinnsylvania?

DUP. Yes.

JANE. No, sir; Cinshinnati is in the State of O—ho—ho.

DUP. I beg your pardon?

JANE. I say Cinshinnati is in the State of O—ho—ho.

DUP. Ohio.

JANE. Oh—hi—e, O—hi—e. I haven't the Yankee touch to my tongue; I can't say it like you, boss.

DUP. (*rises from table folding up a piece of paper and hands it to JANE*). There, madam, you take that paper and go out on Broadway and take one of the stages.

JANE. And get arrested for it?

DUP. No, no. You jump into one of them stages, and go down to City Hall Park. Then take the Third Avenue cars, go to Harlem, go over the long bridge, up into Morrisania to No. 514—Mrs. Honeysuckles's.

JANE. Where? Say, boss, couldn't you say that again, and say it aisy?

DUP. Certainly. You take one of the Broadway stages, ride down to City Hall Park, take Third Avenue car, go to Harlem, over the long bridge, up into Morrisania, No. 514, Mrs. Honeysuckles's. She is a young widow with two children — a nice lady, little to do, a good situation.

JANE. Listen to the tongue of that fellow! Well, I'll go to Mrs. Honeysuckles's, boss. (*Goes towards the door R., stops and comes back.*) Hold on! Hold on! Not so fast! Look here, boss!

DUP. Well, madam, what do you want?

JANE. Say, boss, I gave you a five dollar bill a while ago, and you said your price was two dollars.

DUP. So you did; I'd quite forgotten it. (*Feels in his pocket.*)

JANE. Well, you see I didn't, boss.

DUP. Well, I haven't got any small bills about me. Won't you be kind enough to stop in as you come back, and I'll give it to you.

JANE. Is it all right, boss?

DUP. Certainly, ma'am. You don't doubt my honesty?

JANE (*looking at him hesitatingly*). No. (*Aside.*) Nor your rascality either. (*Starts to go.*) Well, good-day, boss.

DUP. Good-day, madam.

JANE. Hold on! I say, boss, it's a long distance up to Mrs. Honeysuckles's, and my shoes is bad. Couldn't you give me a five-cent piece to ride in the cars?

DUP. My dear madam, you don't want any money. All you have to do is to get in the cars and mention my name to the conductor, and he'll set you right down at the door.

JANE. Yes? And what is your name?

DUP. Duplex — Livingstone Duplex.

JANE. Livingstone Duplex and Honeysuckles. That's a funny name. (*Aside.*) Well, I'll go up to Honeysuckles's for the situation, and if that pair of tongs is trying to cheat me, by the verge of my oath when I come back I'll brain him! (*Aloud.*) Well, good-day, boss. (*Exit R.*)

DUP. (*takes his hat and cane and comes forward*). There. I've got rid of her. I've got ten dollars, and now I think I'll go and take a drink. (*Starts to go, when SMITHERS enters R.; aside.*) Hallo! here's my colored friend back again. (*to SMITHERS.*) Well, you've got back, have you?

SMI. Yes, I've got back.

DUP. Well, you found everything as I told you?

SMI. Yes; I went up to Canal Street, got on de cars, and de conductor come for de fare, and I said, "Duplex — all right."

DUP. Yes, that was right.

SMI. No, it *wasn't* right. He said, "Give me your fare." I told him your name — Duplex; he said, "I don't know Duplex; give me your fare or I put you out." And I said Duplex again, and he chucked me out of the window.

DUP. There's some mistake; there must have been a new conductor on the cars.

SMI. I thought there was a *big* mistake. I landed way out in the street.

DUP. Well, you found the situation all right?

SMI. Yes, oh, yes. Now look here, boss, dat man don't want no bar-keeper. What you give me dis paper for? Take it back.

DUP. Why, you surprise me. You went to the wrong place.

SMI. Yes, he surprised me, too. I went whar you told me.

DUP. Did you find the proprietor in?

SMI. Yes.

DUP. What did you say to him?

SMI. I went in and told him he wanted a bar-keeper, and he said that he didn't; and told me to clear out, dat he didn't allow niggers in dar. I told I wouldn't go out, dat Mr. Duplex sent me here for de situation, and I was going to work; and I commenced to pull off my coat. He says, "Go out or I'll throw you out." I told him no; I paid two dollars for the situation, and I was going to work; and at that he raised dat side of sole leather and swung backwards and forwards, and I was just fool enough to stand right where it stopped every time; so I got out of there, and I have come here to get my money. So give me my three dollars.

DUP. Well, now, I am astonished. I'll find out about this, and see that you are righted in this matter.

SMI. Well, here, give me three dollars, and take this paper dat ain't worth nothing.

DUP. I haven't got the change. You see, I haven't been out since you was here. I am now going down to the bank to make a deposit, and I'll get your change. In the meantime, you stay here and look out for my office while I am gone. If any one comes in, tell them I'll be back in a few minutes.

SMI. Well, look here, Mr. Duplex, don't deposit dat three dollars, and hurry back with my change.

DUP. I won't be gone more than ten minutes.

SMI. Dat fellow's trying to cheat me. I'll stay here, and if he don't come back soon, I'll sell his place out to the highest bidder. (*Goes to desk and commences to write.*)

(*Enter JANE.*)

JANE (*to audience; aside*). Well, I went up to Honeysuckles's. She's a young widow and got no children, and don't want no nurse. (*Looks around.*) Now, I think that man wants to rob me out of my money. (*Goes to desk back of SMITHERS.*) There he is with another man's clothes on. I say, boss — boss! O boss! Bossy, Bossy! I say, boss, if you don't come here to me, I'll go to you. (*SMITHERS don't notice her at all; JANE goes up and swings her foot as though she would kick him.*) Boss, I'll rise you if you don't speak to me. (*Kicks him; STEVE jumps up from chair, and both go C. front.*)

JANE. Oh, it's a nagur!

SMI. You want a situation?

JANE. Well?

SMI. Give me five dollars, and I'll owe you three.

JANE. What are you talking about?

SMI. Give me five dollars, an' I owe you three. Den you get the situation. Go jump in de canal, up 170-11th Street, turn around de corner —

JANE. I went up to Mrs. Honeysuckles's; she don't want no servant. Now I want me money.

SMI. Give me five dollars, and I owe you three.

JANE. I gave you five dollars a while ago. The other man — where is he? Isn't this 16 Broadway?

SMI. Yes, this is No. 16 Broadway.

JANE. Well, I want me money. You're in with that fellow to cheat me.

SMI. I ain't got your money. The other man ain't here. Give me five dollars, and —

JANE (*getting nearer and threatening to strike*). Will you give me me money?

SMI. (*holds up his hands to protect himself*). Go away, Irish, don't you strike me.

(*Both get very much excited, and talk very loud and fast; finally they both stand up to each other, face to face, so they rub their noses together, when JANE gets her face all black, turns to audience, keeps talking all the time; then they clinch, when JANE throws SMITHERS down, then takes him by the coat collar and pants and throws him through set window, R.; as she turns to come forward she discovers DUPLEX coming from R. She throws her arm around his neck and gets him in chancery and pommels him as the scene closes.*)

REMARKS.

There is a good deal of fine business and points to display, which cannot be written down. When it is rehearsed they will come to the performers. Duplex should be dressed as Robert Macaire style, and act very pompous, like a confidence man.

G. H. COES.

THE MAN ABOUT TOWN

A Negro Farce in One Act

By E. BOWERS

CHARACTERS.

JOSHUA SEEDS, *a tobacconist.*

ORLANDO SHORTCUT, *who would be his son-in-law.*

PETER PIPES, *the Man about Town.*

JOE BITTERS.

VIRGINIA SEEDS, *Seeds's daughter.*

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PROPERTIES.

Cane for SEEDS. Two letters for PETER. Spectacles. Gun for SEEDS. Gum-drops. Saw, hammer, etc., for SEEDS. One stovepipe bonnet. Dummy sign figure. Box for figure to stand on. Long counter. Bundles, cigar-boxes, broom, etc., for store. Jar with coffee, marked "snuff."

THE MAN ABOUT TOWN

SCENE I. — *A street in one.*

(*Enter ORLANDO, L.*)

ORLANDO. I am more than half a mind to go and take an oath to burn and destroy all tobacco and old Seeds in particular. He has just refused his daughter; kicked me out of the house, and locked me in her room. My only plan now is to run away married in spite of him. But how to get a letter of my plan.

PETER (*sings outside L.*). Halloo! there is my Pipes. He is just the man I want; but then he has never mind; he can contrive some plan to get a sure. (*Calls PETER.*) I say, Peter! Peter! come to speak with you.

(*Enter PETER, L., singing.*)

PETER. Why, Shortcut, how are you? You new barber's pole.

ORLANDO. Peter, where have you been this long makes you look so shabby?

PETER. Why, I saved up four dollars to go in when I busted.

ORLANDO. What did you do with the four dollars?

PETER. I put it in the bank — Faro Bank.

ORLANDO. How did you succeed with your investment?

PETER. First-rate. I got in the poorhouse this time.

ORLANDO. How did you get out of the poorhouse?

PETER. I knocked down the keeper and run.

ORLANDO. Well, Peter, I can put you in a few dollars. Can I trust you?

PETER. I guess so; that's what they all do.

ORLANDO. Oh, no; I mean can I lodge a secret?

PETER. Well, I think so; that is, if the lodge is secret.

ORLANDO. Why, have you no money — no blunt?

PETER. Blunt? What do you mean by blunt?

ORLANDO. Why money, — money is blunt. A

PETER. Oh, a shilling is blunt, is it?

ORLANDO. Yes. Now listen to me. I have a father.

PETER. Well, some people do have fathers at some period of their lives.

ORLANDO. I have a father who has threatened to cut me off with a shilling.

PETER. But a shilling ain't sharp enough.

ORLANDO. Why ain't a shilling sharp enough?

PETER. Because it's blunt. Ha, ha, ha!

ORLANDO. Never mind; my father has threatened to cut me out of his will because I fell in love.

PETER. Well, can't you get up again?

ORLANDO. No; I have pledged my love beyond redemption.

PETER. Redemption? I know him; he is a pawnbroker.

ORLANDO. Before this threat of my father's everything was all right; but the father of the girl I love heard of it, and to-day has kicked me out of the house, and locked his daughter in her room. Now, I wish to run away with her and get married, and I wish you to take a note to her. Will you assist me?

PETER. How much is the young lady worth?

ORLANDO. About forty thousand dollars.

PETER. Has she got any sisters?

ORLANDO. No; she is an only child. Why?

PETER. Well, I was thinking of marrying into the family myself if she had a sister.

ORLANDO. Well, well, will you assist me?

PETER. Make it five dollars and a quarter.

ORLANDO. Five dollars and a quarter be it, then. In the first place, I will write a note, which you must take to the young lady. But you must not let her father see you, and I think you will have to use stratagem to get into the house.

PETER. Stuttering Jim? I know him.

ORLANDO. Oh, no; I mean you will have to be very careful and not let her father see you.

PETER. Has the house got a door?

ORLANDO. Of course the house has got a door.

PETER. Then all I've got to say is, she will get the note.

ORLANDO. Then come this way, and I will instruct you further.

(Exeunt both, L.)

SCENE II. — *A chamber in two.*

(Enter OLD SEEDS and VIRGINIA R. and L., meeting.)

SEEDS. Well, my child, here you are, thinking of Mr. Orlando Shortcut, no doubt. I can tell you one thing, you never shall marry him.

VIRGINIA. But, father, why object to him; he is a dear, sweet man.

SEEDS. Sweet or sour, he don't get you. You must marry some one out of the common way.

VIRGINIA. But people who are out of the common way are not at all in my way.

SEEDS. No, no; your husband must be rich and a man of taste.

VIRGINIA. His taste I sha'n't dispute, for his love for me will prove his taste. (PETER *knocks* L.)

SEEDS. Go see who is at the door. (*Enter* PETER, L.) Well, whoever it is, he is coming in without waiting for an invitation. (PETER *has a letter which he tries to make* VIRGINIA *notice.*)

SEEDS. Well, sir, what do you want?

PETER. Does Mr. Cadwallader live here?

SEEDS. No; Mr. Cadwallader don't live here.

(PETER *makes signs to* VIRGINIA *which she does not see.* SEEDS *keeps his back towards* PETER *as much as possible.*)

PETER. A man told me this was his house.

SEEDS. Mr. Cadwallader don't live here, and this is not his house; and if that is all you want, the sooner you get out of this house the better, or I will have you kicked out.

(PETER *pretends to cry, rushes towards* VIRGINIA, *tries to have her see the note.* She *turns her back.*)

SEEDS. What is the matter with you? Why do you look thus wildly at my daughter, and burst into tears?

PETER. A man told me Mr. Cadwallader lived here, and I want to see Mr. Cadwallader, because if I see Mr. Cadwallader, Mr. Cadwallader will — (*Aside.*) I wish the gal would take this letter.

(*During this* OLD SEEDS *has been watching* PETER. PETER *holds the letter towards* VIRGINIA, *when* OLD SEEDS *seizes* PETER *and the letter.*)

SEEDS. What is this? A letter to my daughter, and from Orlando Shortcut? And you are the carrier, are you?

PETER. Yes, I am the mail — I am the blackmail.

SEEDS. I'll blackmail you. I'll stop your carrying letters.

PETER. It's against the law to stop the mail.

SEEDS. Where is my gun — sword — pistol — anything?

PETER. Here is a shoestring.

(SEEDS *gets his cane and beats* PETER *off* L.; *then crosses to* VIRGINIA.)

SEEDS. So, so; treason in my house, and you are at the bottom of it. I'll lock you in your room, and you sha'n't leave it until you are married, and married to please me.

VIRGINIA. But father, Mrs. Stitch, the dressmaker, will be here to-day. I hope you will allow me to see her.

SEEDS. I'll think of it. Come, away to your room, you ungrateful daughter! Come, in with you! (*Pushes VIRGINIA off R., and exit R.*)

SCENE III. — *A street, same as first scene. Enter ORLANDO, R.*

ORLANDO. Confound that fellow, how he stays! (*Looks off L.*) Ah, here he comes at last.

(*Enter PETER, L.*)

Well, Peter, how does our game proceed?

PETER. Our game's played out. I had a bad hand, and was beaten.

ORLANDO. Did not my letter reach the lady?

PETER. No; but the old man's cane reached me, and I've reached here, and I've got the worst of the bargain.

ORLANDO. In other words, you left his *cane* while you were *able*.

PETER. That's what I was just on the *eve* of telling you.

ORLANDO. Well, our bargain was, you were to deliver the letter, and I was to give you five dollars.

PETER. And a quarter.

ORLANDO. If you don't deliver the letter, you don't earn the money.

PETER. Well, I'll try once more, and if I fail this time, I'm no actor.

ORLANDO. Actor? Why, are you a spouter?

PETER. Yes; I spout everything I can get my hands on.

ORLANDO. Well, come this way, and we will have another trial of your skill. (*Exeunt both, L.*)

SCENE IV. *Chamber with window for PETER to jump through.*

(*Enter OLD SEEDS, R.*)

SEEDS. I have been watching to see if I could find any of the servants of Mr. Orlando Shortcut round here. The idea of his marrying my daughter! Why, the fellow has not got a penny in the world. What, marry the daughter of the Seeds family! Why, the fellow must be crazy. Ah, here comes my daughter. (*Enter VIRGINIA, R.*) Well, my dear, I see you have at last gained strength enough to leave your room.

VIRGINIA. Yes, father; but is it not strange Mrs. Stitch, the dressmaker, does not come?

SEEDS. There you go again! It seems to me you think of nothing but Mrs. Stitch and that puppy Shortcut. But you never shall marry him; that you can be sure of.

VIRGINIA. But, father, you know that I love him, and —

SEEDS. Love him! You fall in love with every man you see. There was Mr. Somerset. As soon as you saw him, you were dead in love.

VIRGINIA. Now, father, you know he was rich, and a man of taste. But you would not let me marry Mr. Somerset.

SEEDS. No. Do you think I wanted my daughter to turn a Somerset? Never.

(Knock outside. Enter PETER dressed as MRS. STITCH, with hoops, etc. In this scene PETER speaks in a female voice.)

PETER. Good-day, my dear, will your brother have the kindness to leave us to ourselves?

VIRGINIA. My brother! Why, Mrs. Stitch, that is my father!

PETER. Excuse me; he looks so young, I thought it was your brother.

SEEDS. That's a very sensible dressmaker, and not bad looking. No, Mrs. Stitch, I could not leave the room. You must know that there is a young fellow pretends to love my daughter, and he has a low blackguard of a rascal engaged to bring letters to her, and I could not think of leaving. Besides, I could not think of leaving so beautiful, so charming, so interesting a lady as yourself without having some conversation with her.

PETER *(aside; natural voice)*. I'll have the old thief arrested for keeping a disorderly house.

SEEDS. I cannot leave the room, but I will turn my back. *(SEEDS looks out of window. PETER crosses R. to VIRGINIA. During the following conversation, PETER has a tape and measures VIRGINIA, as if for a dress.)*

VIRGINIA. Ah, Mrs. Stitch, I'm not happy. I want a warm heart —

PETER. A warm heart? You have got tongue enough, but you want more pluck. What will you have, a sheep's tongue or a beef's heart — which?

VIRGINIA. You don't understand me. I want sympathy.

PETER. I haven't got any sympathy, but I've got some harts-horn.

VIRGINIA. Ah! You are an artless, innocent creature.

PETER. Did you say you would have some hartshorn?

(PETER pulls up his dress, as if to get at his pants pocket. OLD SEEDS watching them. VIRGINIA stops PETER and exclaims.)

VIRGINIA. Pray, Mrs. Stitch, remember decorum.

PETER. De-co-rum. Yes; he is the one that told me to give the gal this note. *(Takes out note, OLD SEEDS watching.)*

SEEDS. Hang me, if that dressmaker hasn't got a note. I must watch them.

(PETER goes up to VIRGINIA to give her the note. He puts his hand on her shoulder, and is supposed to get pricked by a pin. PETER

exclaims in his natural voice, "Damn that pin!" OLD SEEDS rushes between them, seizes the note, then grabs PETER by the skirts, beats him round stage with cane; the skirt tears off, leaving nothing on PETER but pants, hoops, waist, and bonnet. PETER runs for the window, jumps, and is caught with head out of window and heels in, OLD SEEDS beating him with cane as scene closes in.)

SCENE V. — *Street, same as first.*

(Enter ORLANDO, L.)

ORLANDO. What can keep Peter so long? I suppose his last plan has failed with the rest. *(Looks off L; enter PETER, L, still in hoops.)* Well, Peter, caught again?

PETER. Yes; caught again. I don't understand these lover scrapes, so you must make some allowance.

ORLANDO. Thus far everything is a failure.

PETER. Well, I've got a plan to finish the job now. I want you to go down by the pump and wait until I come. *(Exit PETER, L.)*

ORLANDO. I have not the least doubt but this will fail with the rest. Never mind, I'll wait down by the pump. *(Exit L.)*

SCENE VI. — *Exterior of a tobacco store. Sign over door "Jacob Seeds." A sign figure, size of life, stands before the door, with long white coat, white hat, red shirt and pants the same as PETER'S.*

(Enter PETER, L.)

PETER. Here is old Seeds's house; but how to get in, that is the question. Let me see; I'll take the clothes off this old fellow, put them on, and then see what kind of a sign I will make. *(Takes the figure off the box. Exit with it, L.; puts on coat and hat the same as those on the figure; enter immediately.)* Now, I don't see but what I can make a good sign. I'll just stand on this box. The young lady may come out of the house or look out of the window; then I can give her the letter. *(Stands on box in the same position as the figure was.)* There, I guess I make as good a sign as any in the city.

(OLD SEEDS appears at upper window in flat with a gun.)

SEEDS. I wonder if there are any of the servants of Mr. Orlando Shortcut round here. If I see any of them, I'll blow their brains out. Hallo, there is my sign figure out-doors yet. I say Joe, Joe, take in the sign and shut up shop. *(Disappears from window. Enter JOE from house and takes PETER, who stands stiff, and carries him into house. Then returns and gets box, and exit into house.)*

SCENE VII. — *Interior of tobacco store; long counter with bundles tied up; three or four jars, one filled with ground coffee to represent snuff; a stove painted red to represent a very hot fire; a broom; a set window, L. 3 E. for PETER to jump through. PETER discovered standing on box near the stove; he is now representing the figure; makes business about the fire in stove being hot.*

PETER. Well, I'm in here at last. That fellow thought he was bringing in that old sign figure. Now, if I can only fool the old man it will be all right. Ah, here he comes now. (*Strikes attitude on the box same as the figure was.*)

(*Enter OLD SEEDS, L., VIRGINIA, R.*)

SEEDS. Now, Virginia, promise me that you will forget Mr. Orlando Shortcut, and I will give you a new bonnet, a new silk dress — and —

PETER. A soup ticket.

SEEDS. Eh? what did you say about soup?

VIRGINIA. Soup? I said nothing about soup.

PETER (*aside*). I wish she would put that old blower on this stove; it's getting mighty hot here.

SEEDS. I'll tell you what I am going to do with my sign figure. You know Mr. Brown the grocer, well, he has a Chinaman in his window with gas burning out of his mouth. Now, I'm a-going to take my sign figure there, bore a hole through him, put a gas-pipe into his head, stand him in my window, and light his nose.

PETER (*aside*). Not as I nose — on, old fellow.

SEEDS. Now, Virginia, you stop here, and I will go and get my implements and commence the job to-night. (*Exit OLD SEEDS, R.*)

PETER (*trying to attract VIRGINIA's attention*). Pst! pst! say, come here. (*VIRGINIA looks round bewildered; PETER jumps off box; she screams.*) It's all right; don't make any noise. Mr. Shortcut sent me here; he is waiting for you down by the pump. Don't stop to talk, but away with you. (*VIRGINIA exit, L.; PETER looking round.*) Well, Old Seeds has got a nice store here. (*Goes up to counter and puts some of the bundles up the back of his coat; make any business here.*) I must look out; here comes the old man. (*Gets in position on the box same as before; enter SEEDS, R., with a hand-saw, hammer, etc.*)

SEEDS. I do think when I get my sign figure in the window it will be a great curiosity.

PETER (*aside*). You needn't take so many panes about that window; it's the last place I'll go into.

SEEDS. I'll commence the job at once. I'll clear off this counter and lay it down here. (*Goes to arrange counter; upsets the jar of coffee near the stove and under PETER's nose; business of PETER trying not to sneeze; SEEDS says.*) There goes a jar of my

best snuff. I'll just sweep it up a little. (*Gets broom and sweeps the coffee up by the box, under PETER's nose; PETER, business, etc.*)

SEEDS. Why, I left my daughter here; where can she be? (*PETER trying not to sneeze; SEEDS calls.*) Virginia, Virginia! Where are you? (*By this time PETER can hold in no longer; he commences to sneeze; OLD SEEDS looks at him thunderstruck; PETER jumps off of box, and runs down L., sneezing; OLD SEEDS stands trembling, looking at him, R.*)

PETER. It's all right, old fellow; I couldn't stand it any longer.

SEEDS. Hang me, if that ain't the dressmaker! (*Rushes PETER round stage; PETER jumps out of window; crash of glass, etc.; OLD SEEDS puffing and blowing, almost out of breath.*) This is another plot to rob me of my daughter. Where the deuce can she be? (*Calls.*) Virginia! Virginia!

(*Enter VIRGINIA and ORLANDO SHORTCUT, L.; they both hold out their hands to OLD SEEDS.*)

VIRGINIA. Here we are, father, and want your blessing! (*At this moment PETER puts his head in the window and exclaims.*) Shortcut, where is that five dollars and a quarter? (*OLD SEEDS seizes an armful of bundles from the counter; VIRGINIA and ORLANDO cross to R.H. as curtain lowers; PETER puts his head in and out of window; OLD SEEDS throwing bundles at him; PETER laughing at him; dodging the bundles, etc.*)

CURTAIN.

MRS. DIDYMUS' PARTY

A Negro Sketch in One Scene

AS PERFORMED BY
SCHOOLCRAFT AND COES

ARRANGED AND EDITED FOR PUBLICATION, WITH ALL THE
ORIGINAL "GAGS" AND STAGE BUSINESS

BY
GEORGE H. COES

MRS. B. I shall run home. Who knows but it may be in the china tea-pot. I fly to see. (*Exit L.*)

WINIFRED. It may be packed up with the gold snuff-box. I am all impatience to know. (*Exit L.*)

JEMIMA. I have a very strong suspicion that it is snugly concealed in the silver coffee-pot. I am all over pins and needles at the thought. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. G. By the pointed declaration that the will is to be read here, I am convinced that it is placed in the old family tankard, which was such a favorite of dear Gaffer Grey. Oh, what a triumph it will be to witness the disappointment of those harpies. (*Exit L., after a pause.*)

(*Enter BIDDY, L., showing in MRS. SMITH, LYDIA, and MARY.*)

BIDDY. Please, mum, and young ladies, missus will be here directly, she bid me say.

MRS. S. Beg of her not to hurry herself; we can wait.

BIDDY. Just as you please, mum. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. S. So at last, my dear children, we are to know the result of Gaffer Grey's will; and also what benefits each will derive from his legacy to her.

MARY. If grandfather has left me nothing but a kind message, I shall feel satisfied. I am young and not totally unprovided for. Lydia and I can still live comfortably together.

LYDIA. That we can; it is no hardship to us to work. Our little school is increasing: and the sale of Mary's drawings and my embroidery enables us to put by a little money every year, so I have not much anxiety about grandfather's will.

MRS. S. I am glad to hear you talk so calmly about it, for after all, my dear girls, you have the best right to his money, and I shall be very much surprised if he has not left you each something, and shall be still more astonished if he has left me anything. One great consolation will be that I can very well dispense with his bounty. (*Re-enter MRS. GREEN, L.*) Ah, cousin Clementina, how do you do. Well, what is going to happen relative to cousin Grey's will?

MRS. G. It is to be read here, to-day, by his particular desire.

MRS. S. Indeed! but where is this all-important document?

MRS. G. According to this note (*gives note to MRS. SMITH*) the will is packed up with one of the legacies; *which*, we have yet to learn.

MRS. S. (*after reading note*). Then, Araminta, I will just run home, and examine my old picture, and I will bring your two parcels, girls, with me. (*Exit L.*)

MARY. There is scarcely any occasion for that, cousin, it is sure not to be there.

LYDIA. Quite certain! Just imagine grandfather Grey, the most cautious man in the world, trusting his will to the keeping of two giddy girls.

MRS. DIDYMUS' PARTY.

SCENE. — *A plain room in 3.*

(As scene opens, Enter LUKE with Banjo, D. in F. Takes chair and sits L. C., front of stage.)

LUKE. I went down to George's house, and George wasn't in, so I told his mother that Mrs. Didymus was going to give a party this evening, and 't was necessary to have the orchestra, or the ball can't proceed. So I went down and George wasn't in, and I got it. He don't know I got it. He'll be awful mad when he finds it out. He ain't a going to find it out if I can help it. *(Sounds it.)* Oh my! All in kilter, too. All ready! Take your partner for the *Scotch itch*, first four forward! *(Plays banjo and calls figures. Enter GEORGE, door in F., steals softly behind LUKE. As LUKE slides his hand up the handle of banjo, GEORGE takes hold near the scroll. LUKE slides his hand back, and comes in contact with GEORGE'S hand. Business of LUKE turning his eyes slowly to L. H. Sees GEORGE'S hand, gently puts banjo from him, and goes off R. H. I E.)*

GEORGE *(laughs)*. That's just like a nigger. That's the coolest piece of impudence I ever saw. That scoundrel, a perfect stranger, came into my house, and that banjo was lying on the piano in the parlor, and he took it. If I hadn't come in just as I did, he'd have got away with it. I wonder who he is, and if he'll come back again. *(GEORGE plays; Enter LUKE, R. H., goes to GEORGE and brushes his shoulder with his hand.)*

L. Little dust on your shoulder!

G. Is there? Well, never you mind the dust on my shoulder. Didn't you just now go out that door yonder?

L. Yes; dat's the one I went out of.

G. What did you come back for.

L. I come back for —

G. For what?

L. I come back for, dat's for what.

G. Well, I say, what did you come back for; what do you want?

L. *(points to banjo)*. De orchestra.

G. What! this banjo?

L. Yes, sir.

G. Well, you can't have it.

L. Oh, I don't want it, bless your heart. Don't think you're flavoring me any. I don't want it.

G. Who does want it?

L. Mrs. Didymus.

G. Who?

L. Mrs. Didymus! (*Very loud.*)

G. Who is Mrs. Didymus?

L. She's a lady.

G. That's all very well, but who is she, where is she, what is she, what is she going to do with it?

L. She's going to give a party dis evening, and she say it's necessary to have it, or the ball can't proceed.

G. Oh, she did, eh?

L. Yes, sir.

G. Very well; the ball can't proceed. You go right back and tell Mrs. Didymus that she cannot have it.

L. Well, I can't help that.

G. I didn't say you could help it, did I?

L. No; she says she wants it.

G. I don't care if she does. She can't have it.

L. That's not my fault, is it?

G. No; it's not your fault, as I know of.

L. She says it's necessary.

G. Well, I don't care if it is necessary. She can't have it.

L. Thank ye. I done all I can do, didn't I?

G. Yes, you done all you can do.

L. I asked you for it, didn't I?

G. Yes; and I said no, didn't I?

L. I believe you did.

G. I mean it.

L. Thank ye. (*Is going; turns.*) Did you call me?

G. No; I didn't call you.

L. I thought you did. Before I go out, just understand one thing, and dat is — don't blame me. (*Slaps his breast.*)

G. Heavens and earth! I'm not blaming you at all.

L. That's right; don't do it. That's what I want you to do, for I ain't got no more to do with it than you have.

G. Not so much.

L. Not half.

G. Not half — no.

L. No, not half. Kase you've got it.

G. I have.

L. I haven't.

G. No; you have not.

L. I'm just simply — that's all.

G. Simply? Simply what?

L. I'm just merely simply sent on a message.

G. You've delivered your message, haven't you?

MRS. DIDYMUS' PARTY.

- L. Yes, sir.
G. And you've got your answer.
L. Well, that ain't what I want.
G. What do you want?
L. I want de orchestra.
G. (*very loud*). Well, I tell you that you cannot h
L. Well, I know that.
G. Then get right out of that door there!
L. Which door?
G. That one yonder.
L. (*looks around*). What's the matter with that on
G. No; it's not broke!
L. Oh, there's other doors I can go out of.
G. That one there suits me pretty well.
L. It may not suit me as well.
G. Ain't you going out?
L. Ain't you going to lend it to her?
G. No! (*Very loud; LUKE mocks him.*)
L. Well, here! here's just it.
G. What's just it.
L. What? I say what— what are we going to do
G. Confound your impudence! Young man, do
stand on your head, right down there? (*Points to,*
repeats.)
L. What's the matter with the way I am standing
G. If I get up to show you, you'll find out, I reckon
L. Oh, I guess not.
G. Oh, I guess yes.
L. Oh, I guess not. (*GEORGE starts; LUKE jum*
G. You'd better jump, for you know you deserve it
faces.) You make faces at me, and I'll tear you to pie
L. I ain't making faces at you.
G. What are you doing?
L. That's the way I smile when I laugh.
G. I'll make you cry, if I get up to you once.
L. I guess you ain't so big as you look.
G. (*starts*). What's that you say? (*LUKE makes fe*
That's the most persevering scoundrel I ever met.
he'll come back again? (*Plays.*)
L. (*enters, and brushes his collar*). A little d
necktie.
G. Heaven and earth! are you back here again?
L. Yes.
G. I thought I just now told you to get out of that door yonder.
L. Yes; that's the one I went out of.
G. What brought you back again?
L. My feet.
G. Of course; what do you want now?
L. Well, she told me to told you— dat— she tell'd me to told

you that's it's necessary to have it — impossible to take no for a answer.

G. She's very considerate, isn't she?

L. She's getting somewhat that way.

G. I should say she was.

L. She's a very fine lady, and wants to form your acquaintance.

G. Oh, she does. Well, I'm not forming any new acquaintances now.

L. She don't know that.

G. You can tell her that when you go back.

L. I wouldn't have time. She says if you'll lend it to her, she'll take the best of care of it, *and* any damages done she'll damage the damages.

G. She's very kind. Tell me, is Mrs. Didymus a responsible person?

L. A ron-sonsical —

G. Is she solid?

L. Solid! My goodness! A great big fat woman (*spreads his hands*) way out here.

G. I don't care how fat she is.

L. You knows her — sakes alive, you knows her well — she's a tall-complected woman.

G. Tall, and dark complexion?

L. She's the color of a bay horse.

G. I never saw her in my life, and this is something I never do, — to let this banjo go out of my possession.

L. I knowed you wouldn't let me have it, and that's the reason I asked you.

G. Tell me, is the company there assembled ready to dance?

L. Yes, all there, waiting for de orchestra.

G. 'Twould be a sad disappointment if they didn't have this banjo?

L. Yes, indeed it would so.

G. If I loan it, will you bring it back yourself?

L. If there's a piece of it left dat big (*measures his finger*), you shall have it.

G. Any strings broke, will you replace them?

L. Yes, I'll put all new springs on it.

G. And have it back to me by eight o'clock to-morrow morning?

L. Fore de sun's up.

G. Sure now?

L. Yes, thank you.

G. Well, no; I won't loan it. I'll keep it myself.

L. Oh, come on; quit yer foolin'.

G. I tell you, you can't have it. Now get out.

L. Oh, I ain't got no time to fool with you. If you is going to lend it to her, let me have it.

G. (*pushes him off*). Get out of here. (*LUKE talks to himself.*) What are you talking about?

- L. Don't you hear it?
G. No, I don't.
L. Well, dat's your fault.
G. You talk out loud, if you talk to me.
L. I know what I'm saying.
G. I don't know what you are saying.
L. No ; it wouldn't be good for you, if you did.
G. Oh, go about your business.
L. You shoved me, didn't you?
G. Yes ; I shoved you.
L. For de last time.
G. I don't know whether it is or not.
L. I know whether 'tis or not.
G. Oh, go on ; don't bother me.
L. I'll bet I get it.
G. I'll bet you don't get it — now !
L. Ah, ah, no back talk.
G. Get out !
L. I'll either have that or your heart's blood.
G. What's that you say? (*Chases him out.*) If he comes back to bother me any more, I'll warm his jacket very severely. I'll teach him that he can't steal my banjo with impunity. (*Plays march ; enter LUKE, à la militaire.*)
L. Halt ! two steps back to de rear. (*Salutes.*) Rest !
G. Is it possible you have the audacity to come back here again?
L. Oh, shut up !
G. No, I won't shut up.
L. Oh, get out !
G. No, I won't get out ; I want you to get out.
L. I was told to bring it, dead or alive.
G. You'll have to go dead with it ; you can't take it alive, if I know myself.
L. I'm going to ask you three times peaceably.
G. I don't care how many times you ask, you can't have it, and that settles it.
L. You going to lend it to her once?
G. No, sir !
L. You going to lend it to her twice.
G. No !
L. Third and last call, fifty dollars in de pool.
G. I don't care if there's a hundred, you can't have it. (*LUKE points pistol ; GEORGE sees it, gives banjo and runs off, L. H.*) She can have it.
L. (*puts pistol on floor R. H.*) Oh, I knowed he'd let me have it when he found out that I wanted it. That's the best way to let people know when you want anything. He didn't know I wanted it at first.

(GEORGE steals on behind LUKE, and picks up pistol; LUKE fooling with the banjo.)

G. Here! that's enough of that, right now.

L. Well, are you back here again?

G. Yes, I'm back here again.

L. I thought I told you to get out of that door — that one right there!

G. Oh, that's enough of that. I told you just now Mrs. Didymus might have the banjo for the party to-night.

L. Yes, and I've got it.

G. I recall those words now, and say she can't have it.

L. Who says so.

G. I say so.

L. How you know you say so?

G. I know I say so.

L. You say so 'cause you say so?

G. Yes.

L. That's a very poor say so.

G. You drop that banjo, or I'll make you say so in just one minute.

L. Young fellar, — oh, young fellar, do you want to stand on your head right down there?

G. I'll stand you on your eyebrow.

L. Not this evening. (*Goes for pistol; GEORGE points at him; LUKE going.*) She can get another one. I don't want it.

G. I know she can. Now you get. (*Chases him off.*) Now the idea of him bringing that pistol to bear on me. I've made that by the operation. I don't think he'll come back any more. (*Places pistol on chair at back.*) If he does come back, I'll fix him. (*Plays. LUKE comes on and dances a break.*) This has gone just far enough. (*Pushes him; LUKE resists quietly.*) Say, young fellow; I want you to understand that patience has ceased to be a virtue with me.

L. Yes! (*Sullenly.*)

G. I'm tired of talking to such an individual as you.

L. So I understand.

G. I've refused you that banjo at least twenty times, and you persist in coming back after it, and acting like a perfect fool from beginning to end.

L. So I hear.

G. Do you know what I do when I get tired of talking to such a duck as you are?

L. So I hear.

G. I smack 'em right in the face.

L. Hold on. As you are — as you were. One step further, and you know not what you were. That's what they do when they get tired of talking.

- G. Yes; that's what they do.
L. I'm glad I found it out.
G. So am I. It's learned you a lesson, I reckon.
L. Oh, yes! Oh, yes!
G. You'll know what to do next time.
L. Oh, yes; I know what to do now. Say, don't you know there's a time for repentance?
G. Yes; for everybody. What do you mean by that?
L. I've seen 'em go down on their knees and beg people's pardon for less than that.
G. That's something I never did in my life.
L. (*aside*). There's no telling how soon you will.
G. You want some more. (*Goes to strike him, when LUKE points pistol; GEORGE goes to chair, sees pistol gone, finds LUKE has it.*) Hold on! Hold that pistol down! You want to kill somebody? Confound it, I was only joking. (*Business of scaring GEORGE two or three times.*) Hold that pistol down. (*Laughs.*)
L. You didn't know I had it.
G. No; you stole a march on me. (*Aside.*) I had it just now, and I ought to have kept it.
L. Yes; so you ought. You know dat first time you (*hits GEORGE in the face*) smacked me in the face.
G. Here, now! That's enough of that.
L. Oh, I was only jokin' — don't think I'm angry.
G. Well, we're even on the joke. Say, that's a nice pistol you've got there.
L. Yes, it is.
G. Let's go and have some fun with it.
L. What kind of fun?
G. Let's go a hunting.
L. I ain't got no fishing line.
G. No, no; let's go a shooting.
L. I ain't got no bait.
G. No, no; we'll shoot birds.
L. I ain't got no salt.
G. What do you want with salt?
L. Fling on their tails.
G. Nonsense! Come, the pistol is loaded, and I'll get the banjo, and away we'll go.
L. I don't know whether the pistol is loaded or not, to tell you the actual truth. (*Looks into muzzle.*) So dark in dar you can't see anything.
G. How can it be otherwise than dark. (*LUKE pulls trigger; it won't work.*) What's the matter that it pulls so hard as that? Rusty, ain't it?
L. It needs oiling. I never could shoot you with that.
G. I don't believe you could.
L. You done been 'round the corner 'fore I got the pistol roostered.

G. You mean cocked. Let me try it.

L. Go 'long! What you know 'bout it? I've handled more of these than you ever set your eyes on.

G. You have?

L. Yes. Was you ever in the army?

G. No; were you?

L. No. Don't want to be, neither. You have to wait too long for your money, and then you're liable to get shot 'fore pay-day comes round.

G. I don't believe you ever were.

L. Got to click twice. (*Levels it.*) Did you hear it?

G. Yes; I heard it.

L. Why don't you run?

G. Get out! I'm not going to run.

L. Go on; you got time.

G. Nonsense!

L. You got time to go home and tell your family what's going to happen, then come back and let me shoot you.

G. You won't shoot anybody, I reckon.

L. Dat's so. I don't know whether she'd go off or not.

G. What!

L. I found it out here in a rain barrel.

G. And you don't know whether it's loaded or not?

L. No.

G. How can you tell?

L. I can sound her. If she sounds like a steam-car, she is loaded.

G. Let me hear you sound it. (*LUKE blows in barrel.*)

L. Don't sound like there was much in her.

G. Why, you can't tell that way; it might be loaded.

L. Oh, ef you blow in there, and it comes out here, there ain't nothing in it.

G. I never thought of that. (*LUKE puts pistol to his lips; GEORGE grasps his hand.*) Here! you big fool, ain't you got no better sense than that?

L. What's the matter? Did the pistol go off?

G. No, you blockhead. What did you put that pistol to your mouth for? Do you want to blow the top of your head off?

L. Sakes alive, ain't I got my eyes about me.

G. Suppose you have got your eyes about you.

L. Minute I see the load come out, I pull my head to one side.

G. Indeed you will, mighty fast, too.

L. You might as well kill a man, as scare him to death.

G. You're very careless. (*LUKE blows in barrel, and laughs.*)

L. There's not the first thing in it. (*Breaks it in two; barrel falls on floor; GEORGE picks it up, laughing.*) No, no; dat be-long's on here.

G. No, it don't; it belongs right here. (*Laughing.*)

L. (*laughs.*) It's broke!

- G. Yes ; it's broke.
- L. Didn't you know it was broke?
- G. No ! (*LUKE stoops while laughing, GEORGE kicks him. He aims handle of pistol and pulls trigger.*) I ought to break you in two.
- L. Why don't you do it?
- G. Well, I've a great mind to do it.
- L. Why didn't you do it 'fore you found out the pistol was broke?
- G. Never you mind. (*Kicks and slaps him.*)
- L. Kick and slap me around.
- G. What did you come in my house and steal my banjo for ?
- L. I didn't steal it. I took it.
- G. I know you took it.
- L. I come down honorably to get the orchestra for the party, and this is the way I'm treated.
- G. Well, you can't get it without me.
- L. I 'spose I'll have to take you, then.
- G. I want money if I go, too.
- L. You'll get it.
- G. How much?
- L. Three dollars, and all you can eat and drink.
- G. If you'd said that in the first place, you'd saved all this trouble.
- L. You didn't give me time, did ye ?
- G. Yes, I did.
- L. No, you didn't. (*This is repeated two or three times.*)
- G. (*mad*). You want some more of it.
- L. That's my business. If I want some more, I won't come to you for it.
- G. You better not.
- L. I can get it cheaper from a mule—kick and jam a man around.
- G. I'll kick any stranger that comes into my house, and tries to steal my banjo.
- L. I'll try and get acquainted 'fore I come again.
- G. You'd better, if you want to get out of here in good health. (*Both sit front C.*)
- L. How do you like my hat ?
- G. Very nobby.
- L. Why don't you go and get one before they are all gone ?
- G. I will. Where did you buy that ?
- L. Right down de street.
- G. How much?
- L. Two for a quarter.
- G. Cheap enough !
- L. I didn't buy this one.
- G. Where did you get it?
- L. Don't you tell anybody.
- G. No ; certainly not.
- L. Yes, you will.

G. No, I won't.

L. I stole it out of a baby wagon.

G. Why, you wretch! To steal a baby's hat like that.

L. The baby was asleep.

G. Suppose the baby was asleep, you've no right to steal a baby's hat.

L. Let him go home and sleep. He's no right to sleep in the streets.

G. Sleep where it likes. (*Business with hat.*) What are we to do at the party to-night?

L. Do you know Watermelon?

G. Yes.

L. We've got to sing that.

G. You sing it, and I'll play it for you.

Song and Exit.

WATERMELON.

Make dat coffee good and brown,
Gwine to get a home bimeby!
Turn dat hoe cake round and round,
Gwine to, etc.
A for Adam, and P for Paul,
Gwine to, etc.
G for gentle, great and small,
Gwine to, etc.

(*Chorus.*)

Oh dat Watermelon!
Lamb of goodness come bimeby.
I'm gwine to join de contraband children
Gwine to get a home bimeby.

(*Any other two-part song may be substituted.*)

OH, WELL, IT'S NO USE

An Original Negro Sketch in One Scene

**AS PERFORMED BY
SCHOOLCRAFT AND COES**

**WRITTEN AND ARRANGED FOR PUBLICATION, WITH ALL THE
ORIGINAL STAGE BUSINESS**

**BY
GEORGE H. COES**

CHARACTERS.

As originally performed at the Howard Athenaeum, Boston, in 1874.

LUKE LUKE SCHOOLCRAFT

GEORGE GEORGE H. COES

MAN, who can play the banjo.

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PROPERTIES.

Three stools, two behind door in flat, one at R. I E.

OH, WELL, IT'S

SCENE. — *Kitchen*

(*As scene opens GEORGE stands in door in. Business ad libitum until GEORGE has stools under his arms which he then goes to door and peeks out.*)

GEO. Where do you want to put me

LUKE (*very excited*). I don't care w

GEO. Well, I care. What's the matter, anyway?

LUKE (*goes to door again*). Enough

GEO. Oh, he's gone long ago.

LUKE. He'd better be gone.

GEO. What's the trouble?

LUKE (*picking his teeth as if he has* well.

GEO. Very well.

LUKE. Well, very well. (*Ad lib.*)
to get that clam chowder.

GEO. Yes.

LUKE. Very well. You sat down w

GEO. I know I did.

LUKE. Very well. I sat down by th

GEO. You did.

LUKE. I no sooner had de clam chowder when somebody poke in his head and he

GEO. Well, what then?

LUKE. I went out to see where the clam chowder was gone.

GEO. Well, I suppose the landlord took it to eat it, so he took it back to the kitchen.

LUKE. No such't a thing — no such't

GEO. No? What happened?

LUKE. That fellar eat it all.

GEO. (*dramatically*). Why, he was a

LUKE. Yes, he was.

GEO. (LUKE responds "yes" to all the sentences). He was a ruffian of the deepest dye! You should have felled him to the earth with your good right arm; you should have annihilated him; you should have left him weltering in his gore!

LUKE. I would have done it right there and then.

GEO. Why didn't you?

LUKE. When I asked him about it, what you s'pose he done?

GEO. I don't know. What?

LUKE. He pulled a knife on me, dat long. (*Shows.*)

GEO. What did you do in that knife-furious proceeding?

LUKE. What would you do if a man pulled a knife on ye?

GEO. I'd run.

LUKE. Umph! Well, dat's what I done. I wasn't going to stand there and get carved.

GEO. Certainly not. Why, you must have had some previous trouble with that fellow.

LUKE. Yes, he's a rival.

GEO. Rival? In love?

LUKE. Yes.

GEO. Who is the fair damsel engaged in this imbroglio?

LUKE. This what'll oh?

GEO. Who is the maiden engaged in this controversy?

LUKE (*don't understand*). Yes.

GEO. Who is the girl that caused this trouble?

LUKE. Oh, you knows her — you knows her well.

GEO. Well, who is she?

LUKE. Try and guess.

GEO. Oh, I couldn't guess in a thousand years. (*Ad lib.*)

(LUKE puts his hand to the side of his mouth and whispers to GEORGE.)

GEO. (*hears him in pantomime*). Not Ruth Ann.

LUKE. Ruth Ann Morgan.

GEO. You astound me. I thought you and her were betrothed.

LUKE. I guess not.

GEO. I say, I thought you and her were engaged to be married.

LUKE. Oh, yes!

GEO. What, is the match off?

LUKE. The match is out of the box.

GEO. Well, I am surprised. So the match is off, hey?

LUKE. She give me the shook.

GEO. What for?

LUKE. Oh, just simply —

GEO. Simply for what?

LUKE. Just simply for cause.

GEO. What was the cause? There must be a reason why,—a cause for shaking you.

LUKE. Just simply for cause I wouldn't spend all the money I ain't got on her.

OH, WELL, IT'S NO 1

GEO. I know you are very liberal when

LUKE. Then she wanted me to treat
Take a spoonful, put it in your mouth, and
going down your throat. When it's down
thing else. Lemonade — bah! Sour water

GEO. A very pleasing drink for a lady.

LUKE. Fifteen cents a glass — three be
no money lately. Then she wanted me to
clothes.

GEO. I see you look slightly dilapidated
you were wont to do.

LUKE. I haven't but two changes to my

GEO. How is that?

LUKE. Off and on. But that gal — she!

GEO. What's N. Y?

LUKE. No good.

GEO. N. G. is no good.

LUKE. Yes — N. G. is no use. Oh, a
false-hearted croquet.

GEO. Coquette, you mean.

LUKE. Yes, a false-hearted crowket.

GEO. Now, I always thought Ruth Ann
creatures.

LUKE. No such a thing. (*Repeat.*) Y
instead of heart?

GEO. No; what?

LUKE. An ice-house.

GEO. What, a marble heart?

LUKE. Packing ice for de summer. I
worse-est is to come.

GEO. Let's have the worst, for Heaven's

LUKE. I've been grocery insulted.

GEO. Grossly insulted? How?

LUKE. I was grocery insulted.

GEO. No, no; grossly — grossly.

LUKE. This was in front of a grocery store

GEO. Well, how were you *grocery* insulted?

LUKE. You know that grocery store where
the winter?

GEO. Yes.

LUKE. Well, this day you went in to
the price.

GEO. You were not invited, I recollect.

LUKE. No. I was standing in front of the
the opposite side of the street, when who
him and her, arm in arm, going to the ball.
I wanted her to see I seed her, still I didn't
I see she saw I seed her.

GEO. Clear as mud. You wanted to be
did not.

LUKE. Yes. Then I didn't say anything anybody should take offences at. I simply said, "Ow."

GEO. Ow? What then?

LUKE. Well, sir, that fellar turned around without cause or pruffocation —

GEO. Provocation.

LUKE. — and deliberary — deliber-er-erary picked up a tomatus and struck me.

GEO. Hit you with a tomato?

LUKE. A *spilt* tomato.

GEO. Where did he hit you?

LUKE (*looks at a spot on the left breast of his vest, then looks at GEORGE as much as to say, "Here"*). Can't you see?

GEO. Is that where it struck you?

LUKE. Yes.

GEO. Well, all this time I thought that was blood.

LUKE. No, it's a tomato stain.

GEO. Why, that's indelible.

LUKE. No, it's in the vest.

GEO. I see, it's fast colors — it will never wash out.

LUKE (*looks at his vest*). Won't soap wash it out?

GEO. I suppose so. If not that, it might the other.

LUKE (*surprised*). What other? Is there another spot?

GEO. No, no; dirt.

LUKE. Where?

GEO. Why, all over the vest.

LUKE. Bless your heart, that ain't dirt; it's the color of it. It's a dirty white. (*Very mad.*) Won't that ever come out?

GEO. Never in this world.

LUKE (*looking thoughtful*). There are other things he could have struck me with. He might have struck me with an egg — something that'll wash out.

GEO. The idea of hitting you with a spoilt tomato.

LUKE. He aimed to kill me.

GEO. What, with a tomato?

LUKE. S'pose it was a bullet.

GEO. It would have gone through you.

LUKE. S'pose he'd a hit me in my mouth?

GEO. That would have hit you just right.

LUKE. Stained my teeth for life. That's an insult on injury.

GEO. Why didn't you, immediately after he hit you with that tomato, demand the satisfaction due to a colored gentleman.

LUKE. I was afraid I'd get it.

GEO. (*disgusted*). Oh, come on; sit down. (*Places stools C.*)

LUKE. Oh, I don't want to sit down.

GEO. You are awful mad, ain't you?

LUKE. Sakes alive, ain't it enough? (*Tears around stage as if fighting.*)

GEO. Yes; it is a burning shame.

LUKE. There's a stain on my breast for life; never will wash out. (*Goes to GEORGE as if to strike him; GEORGE says, "Sit down;" LUKE slaps him on the back and says*) I won't hurt you, my boy; but oh, if I had him now! (*Motions to strike GEORGE; this is kept up ad lib.*) Let me give you a pointer: never hit a man that way, 'cause when you draw back he's going to get in on ye. (*Doubles and joins both hands in one lump.*) Just double up on him this way, and land one on the jaw that way. (*GEORGE dodges.*)

GEO. For Heaven's sake, sit down!

LUKE. I won't hurt you, my boy. I think too much of you. But oh, if I had him now!

GEO. (*starts to go*). Let me try and find him for you.

LUKE (*stops him*). Don't be in a hurry. Do you think he might come?

GEO. He might. What do you want to do with him?

LUKE. I just want to tramp on his neck, and make him spit blood. If he comes in here, you throw him on me.

GEO. All right. Now, while we are waiting for that man from Oshkosh, let's play a reel or something.

(*GEORGE sits C.; LUKE at R. of him; play. Enter MAN with stool, and sits L. of GEORGE and looks at audience. GEORGE sees him, and, still playing, kicks LUKE on shin.*)

LUKE. Don't put your muddy feet on my pants; you'll spile 'em. (*Turns, and sees MAN; then runs to L. H. corner of stage.*)

GEO. Here he is; now go for him.

LUKE. What for?

GEO. What for? For hitting you with that tomato.

LUKE. He didn't hit you, did he?

GEO. No.

LUKE. What are you interfering for?

GEO. Don't you want satisfaction?

LUKE. Not unless he wants to give it to me.

GEO. Ain't you going to tackle him?

LUKE. I never had no introduction to him.

GEO. You're a big coward! (*Turns and sees MAN; kicks LUKE, who sees MAN and runs to R. H. corner of stage. GEORGE pantomimes to MAN, as much as to say, "I want you to get out of here, or I'll kick you out." This the MAN repeats. GEORGE bows assent; MAN goes to L. I E. and repeats same business. LUKE comes closer, until GEORGE grabs MAN by the neck and pants. LUKE does same to GEORGE, and all go off. LUKE comes back strutting, as if he had put them out, turns and meets GEORGE and thinks it the MAN; discovers his mistake.*)

LUKE (*very brave*). Oh, skuse! I thought it was him.

GEO. What a brave boy you are!

LUKE. Did you see me?

GEO. No; what have you done?

LUKE. Why, I point my finger to him, and he went out like a dog.

GEO. You done nothing to him. 'Twas me that pointed my finger; and out he went. You went over there like a big coward, and I put the man out myself.

LUKE (*very excited*). You mean to say you put the man out?

GEO. I did.

LUKE (*hot*). I went over there, didn't I?

GEO. Yes. What for?

LUKE. To give the man the chance for his life. I went over there to get a chance to stamp on his neck, and make him spit blood, when you put your arm out so, and stopped me. Don't do that again.

GEO. I thought you were afraid of him.

LUKE. Afraid! The man ain't born yet.

GEO. I beg your pardon. (*Shakes his hand vigorously; LUKE pulls his fingers apart.*) I won't interfere next time.

LUKE. If he comes in here again, you go out (*aside*), and I'll go with you.

GEO. Come on; let's play another tune. (*As before, MAN comes on and sits R. of LUKE; GEORGE sees him and pushes LUKE, who sees the MAN and rushes to L. corner. GEORGE goes to LUKE, and tries to make him put him out. LUKE expostulates evasively. GEORGE becomes disgusted, and grabs the MAN. LUKE grabs GEORGE, and all go off L. H. Same bus. as before. LUKE and GEORGE come on again.*)

GEO. You're the biggest coward I ever saw in my life.

LUKE (*very brave*). Did you see me?

GEO. Yes; I see you.

LUKE. I'll bet he'll never come back here again.

GEO. What have you done?

LUKE. Down three flights of stairs — poor fellow. (*To GEORGE.*) Say, he's been in here again.

GEO. I know he has.

LUKE. Say, where was you?

GEO. On that stool, there.

LUKE. Well, I was so excited I didn't see you. He was here, and had that long knife crossways in his teeth. He made a pass for me, and I grabbed him. (*Makes his feet strike stage as he walks across stage.*) Bim! Bam! Boom! Down three flights of stairs. (*GEORGE catches him by his arm.*)

GEO. You're telling me a base falsehood — a base lie.

LUKE. A lie?

GEO. You went over there like a cur, and I put the man out myself.

LUKE (*talks incoherently for some time; very excited*). You mean to say I went over there and you put the man out?

GEO. Yes, I did.

LUKE. Oh, well, it's no use. (*Walks to and fro.*)

GEO. What's no use, you big coward?

LUKE. Yes, I'm a coward.

GEO. You wouldn't harm a flea.

LUKE. No; he's too hard to catch. Oh, no, I didn't do nothing.

GEO. That's right; you done nothing.

LUKE. Oh, well, it's no use. I ought to have killed him when I had him in my hands.

GEO. Why didn't you?

LUKE. What chance did I have?

GEO. All the chance in the world. I threw him on you.

LUKE (*very hot, and gets all mixed up*). I set there, didn't I? The man sat there. You was there. I point my finger for you to get out of the way, and he — oh, what's the use talking to you!

GEO. Do you infer that I interfered with you again?

LUKE. Can't you see what you did?

GEO. No, I cannot.

LUKE. Where's your eyes?

GEO. In my head, of course.

LUKE. They don't look like it. Oh, well, it's no use. That man will go out and brand me as a coward.

GEO. That's what you are. I apologize again.

LUKE. 'Pologize nothing.

GEO. He'll come back again.

LUKE. S'posin' he does, do you think I'd harm a cripple?

GEO. Oh, he's no cripple. See here, if he comes back and you don't put him out, I'll put you and him out together.

LUKE. No, you won't. (*Aside.*) I'll go out. (*Goes to GEORGE as if to strike him.*)

GEO. What would you do?

LUKE. I ought to hit you once, anyhow.

GEO. What for?

LUKE. Then you'd have more confidence in me.

GEO. Come, sit down. (*They play again, and MAN comes behind and between GEORGE and LUKE, and pushes both of them over. LUKE goes R., and MAN follows him menacingly.*)

MAN. Who put me out of here? (*Makes motion to strike LUKE.*)

LUKE. Hit me in the ribs; don't scar any. Did I put you out?

MAN. That's what I want to know, who put me out? (*Same bus.*)

LUKE (*weakens*). Did I put you out? Does I play de banjo?

MAN. I don't believe you do. (*Looks at GEORGE.*)

LUKE. You go and hit him. I'll stand at your back.

MAN (*as LUKE attempts to follow*). You stay there. If you interfere I'll spit on ye and drown ye. (*Goes to GEORGE menacingly. GEORGE appears to weaken.*) Say, did you put me out o' here?

GEO. I believe I did. (*MAN goes to hit GEORGE, who catches him by the throat and throws him down C.; he lays there. LUKE kicks him; MAN hollers, "You're wrong." Gets up.*) Who are you?

(LUKE repeats, and does so at every sentence of GEORGE'S, who tells him to shut up; this is ad lib.)

MAN. Didn't you send to Oshkosh for a musician?

GEO. I did; yes.

MAN. Well, I am him.

GEO. (*takes him by the hand*). I beg pardon for this rough treatment. That scoundrel has deceived me in this whole affair. What instrument do you play?

MAN. I play on a fum. (*Puts his hand behind him.*)

LUKE. He's got a pistol. (*Goes away.*)

GEO. Where is your instrument?

MAN. Here. (*Pulls tambo from his back under his coat.*)

GEO. Tambourine! That's what we wanted. We was going to the ball without you.

MAN. What do we get for this job?

GEO. (*in a low voice*). Fifteen dollars — seven and a half apiece.

MAN. That's satisfactory.

LUKE (*takes GEORGE one side*). Do I ride in the same coach?

GEO. Yes.

LUKE. What do I get?

GEO. You heard the engagement the man made with me on the sidewalk.

LUKE. Yes; my name was left out. Am I in for the money?

GEO. (*pokes his finger in LUKE'S breast*). We get fifteen dollars for the job. I get seven dollars and a half, and he gets seven dollars, and we divide — don't you see?

LUKE (*pokes his breast*). And you — you don't get nothing?

GEO. Not much.

LUKE. Well, I don't want it all. Are we all us?

GEO. All are we-uns.

LUKE. Is all of us, us?

GEO. All. Now let's try that song, "Shine On," and then we'll go. (*Play; LUKE sings one verse, and all sing chorus. Repeat chorus as they march off, or close in, as the case may be.*)

REMARKS.

All through the last of the sketch, after MAN goes to strike GEORGE, LUKE tries every way to apologize to MAN, but is stopped by GEORGE every time he speaks. This must be practised well, so the speeches may not be too much interrupted.

OUR COLORED CONDUCTORS

**An Original Ethiopian Sketch in
Two Scenes**

AS PLAYED BY SCHOOLCRAFT AND COES

**ARRANGED BY
GEORGE H. COES**

OUR COLORED CONDUCTORS.

CHARACTERS.

(As originally presented at the Howard Athenaeum, Boston, in 1874.)

SUPERINTENDENT	GEO. H. CORB
DAN KETCHAM	LUKE SCHOOLCRAFT
BILL GRABBER	HARRY BLOODGOOD
POP	
POLICEMAN	
NEWSBOY	
CONSUMPTIVE	
LADY AND DUMMY BABY	
SILENT FIEND	SUPERNUMERARIES
MRS. MCGINTY, a washerwoman	
MRS. MCCARTHY, another washerwoman	
LADY PASSENGER	
LAME SOLDIER, ETC.	

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PROPERTIES.

Two badges for hats, reading, "Conductor No. 46," and "Conductor No. 47."
Two burlesque bell-punches. Two strips of red and white muslin, to punch fares on, two feet long, two and one-half inches wide, a red and white pinned together for each conductor; to be pinned on the lappel of coat, all ready at R. I. E. A square sign, reading, "Colored Conductors Wanted," for Supt., at R. I. E. Two large clothes-baskets, containing clothes, for washerwomen, R. and L. A cigar for Pop. Cane for Consumptive. Policeman's full suit and club. A dummy, to break in two. A dummy baby. Newspapers for boy. Two crutches for Lame Soldier. Carpet-bag marked "Dynamite," for Silent Fiend.

OUR COLORED CONDUCTORS.

SCENE 1. — *A Plain Chamber in one.*

(Enter SUPERINTENDENT, R. I E., carrying a sign.)

SUPT. I have been for the past six months trying to perfect an honest system among my conductors and drivers, and I find it is an utter impossibility. So I have taken a new departure. I'm going to employ colored conductors for a while, and see how that will work. I've had this sign painted, and will have it hung up. *(Goes to L.)* John, have this sign hung up in some conspicuous place where it can be seen by everybody. *(Turns and goes towards R. aside.)* Mr. Brown, take a seat; I'll be with you in about five minutes. *(Turns and sees BILL and DAN, who have entered arm in arm.)* Good-day!

DAN. Are you de horse car?

SUPT. What? Do I look like a horse car?

BILL. What time will de depot be in?

SUPT. Are you looking for the superintendent?

BILL. De super? Yes, dat's de man. *(They stand one each side of SUPT.)*

SUPT. Do you wish to make application for a situation?

DAN. Yes; I want to be a cross yard conductor.

BILL. Yes; we want to be corn yard conductors.

SUPT. You mean horse car conductors. *(They nod assent.)* Well, you look like a couple of smart boys; where did you work last?

BILL. De man wants to know where you worked last.

DAN. No, he asked you. *(Bus. of disputing which one shall answer.)*

SUPT. Either of you; I care not which.

BILL. He wants to know either — he don't care which.

DAN. Oh, I used to work for a man in de roofing business.

SUPT. What were your duties?

DAN. I used to lay on de skylight to keep de rain out.

SUPT. What did you get for the job.

DAN. I used to get a dollar and a half a day, when it didn't rain.

SUPT. What did you get when it *did* rain?

DAN. I used to get wet.

SUPT. Of course you got wet. (*To BILL.*) Let me hear from you, sir.

BILL. I used to work in a chow-chow factory.

SUPT. What did you do in a chow-chow factory?

BILL. They had me shaving warts off of pickles.

SUPT. *Wart* a situation. Are you married? (*They both look at each other, undecided which way to answer, yes or no.*) I merely ask the question if you are married men.

BILL. Is my clothes tore?

DAN. Any buttons off? Why, what's de matter?

SUPT. We employ no married men on our road.

BILL and DAN (*together*). Oh, we ain't married. Bill, you come very near gettin' married.

SUPT. How near?

BILL. He asked a gal if she'd have him, an' she said no.

SUPT. You see we have a reason for not employing married men. Your salary would be inadequate to —

DAN. Dat's her. She never could keep a situation.

SUPT. Who?

DAN. Annie — didn't you say Annie Quit?

SUPT. No, no; I say your salary would be inadequate — non-sufficient to support a family, consequently you'd be obliged to steal. Now, we want nothing but honest men on our road.

BOTH. Oh, we are honest.

DAN. I'd rather see you lay a corpse at my feet than to steal a half-dollar from you.

BILL. Yes, I'd sooner have a thousand dollars than steal.

SUPT. Well, I believe you would. Where do you reside?

BILL. Show him your side.

SUPT. No; where do you live?

BILL. The man wants to know where you live.

DAN. He asked you whar you live. (*Dispute as before; finally DAN says.*) I live with you — I don't know where it is.

SUPT. (*to BILL*). Where do you live?

DAN. Oh, I live about ten miles out of town.

SUPT. As far as that?

DAN. Oh, it's further, if you have to walk.

SUPT. You'll have to move. (*They look mysterious at each other, when BILL takes DAN forward.*) I say, you'll have to move.

BILL (*to DAN, aside*). Did you see dis man before I come in?

DAN. No, I never see him before. (*Both look at SUPT.*)

SUPT. I say, you'll have to move.

BILL. Yes, dat's what de landlord told us to-day.

SUPT. What I mean to say is, you'll have to move in on the line of the road.

DAN. Oh, we're willing to move whar we can live for noffin'.

BILL. And board ourselves.

SUPT. You see, your duties compel you to get up at four o'clock in the morning.

DAN. At four o'clock !

SUPT. Yes.

DAN. What time do we go to bed ?

SUPT. At three.

DAN. What! Go to bed at three, and get up at four ?

SUPT. Yes.

BILL. De same morning ?

SUPT. Certainly. Why, you have a whole hour to yourself.

BILL. Oh, we do. Oh, well, that's all right. I didn't know as we had that hour.

SUPT. Yes, you have an hour.

BILL. I suppose, if we wanted to use that odd hour, the railroad company wouldn't find any fault.

SUPT. Oh, no ; that hour belongs to you. However, if you wish to utilize that hour, you might, just for a little gentle exercise, come to my house and saw wood or throw in coal.

DAN. Or chew up hay for de horses.

BILL. Or wash off ten or a dozen cars.

SUPT. I don't *car* how many you wash off.

BILL. Well, you may have that odd hour ; I don't think we'll get a chance to use it.

SUPT. And when you arise from your downy couches —

BILL. When you get down off your crutches.

SUPT. When you arise from your beds —

BILL. Do we ever strike a bed ?

SUPT. You do if you have the price. When you get up at four o'clock, you proceed at once to the depot, take your car, and run down town with it. (*Both lock arms and go L.*) Where are you going ?

DAN (*both turn*). See here, boss, my friend is too strong to work.

BILL. Yes, my friend's feet's sore ; he ain't got strength enough to pull a beefsteak off a gridiron. We can't carry a car.

SUPT. You misunderstand me. You jump on your car at four o'clock to make your first trip.

BILL. Has dese cars got horses ?

SUPT. Certainly, we've got horses.

BILL. Oh, all right den. I thought you wanted to use us for horses.

SUPT. No ; we have plenty of stock. Now, when you arrive at the terminus —

DAN. Is he on the road yet? Why, I know Jake Temmus.

SUPT. No ; when you arrive at the end of the route —

BILL. Den we go up de tree.

SUPT. No ; there's a branch, and you're allowed three minutes for breakfast.

BILL. Oh, no ; dat's too much time.

SUPT. Why, you seem surprised at that. We formerly allowed but two minutes, but the passengers and public thought we were too severe on conductors and drivers, so we most magnanimously gave them another minute.

BILL. Well, Mag was kind. Railroad people are very kind; if you haven't got a ticket, you can walk.

SUPT. You also have three minutes for dinner and three for supper. Consequently, you have one hour and nine minutes out of twenty-four.

BILL. Oh, that's time enough. I suppose the railroad company wouldn't have any objections if we brought our meals wid us and eat 'em on de cars.

SUPT. Oh, no; that's a good plan, and we'll adopt it.

DAN. We could sleep on de cars, and be dar all de time.

SUPT. Yes; turn the cushions over.

BILL. We'd have to if we wanted to sleep.

SUPT. And your wages are one dollar and a quarter per diem.

DAN. Is he wid you yet?

SUPT. Who?

DAN. Per dime.

SUPT. I say, your wages are one dollar and a quarter a day each.

(BILL takes DAN forward; aside.)

BILL. De man told me — you didn't understand. He say you get a dollar and a quarter a day, and die wid de itch.

SUPT. No, no; I pay you one dollar and twenty-five cents apiece per day.

BILL. You give us money?

SUPT. Yes.

BILL. We don't want any money. Just let us get on de cars.

DAN. We just want to handle de money a little while. Just to see how it feels, dat's all.

SUPT. Will you try this situation?

BILL. Well, we'll try it for a year, and at de end of dat time if we don't like it we'll quit.

SUPT. I'll get your badges and start you right off. *(Exit SUPT., R.)*

DAN. Look here, Bill, I want you to do me a favor.

BILL. I hain't got a cent.

DAN. Promise me one thing. Don't steal de hosses de fust day.

BILL. Don't you punch any tickets. I know a man in de drug store who'll buy 'em all from us.

(Enter SUPT. with badges, punches, and trip tickets; gives men badges; they both try to tie them on the wrong place.)

SUPT. No, no; you tie those on your caps. *(Business of getting them upside down, etc. Finally start to tie them.)*

BILL. All aboard!

SUPT. Not yet. You are not on the car yet.

DAN. Don't you hear de man say not yet? All aboard!

SUPT. Not yet.

BILL. Don't you hear de man say not yet?

SUPT. Now, before we proceed further in this matter, it will be requisite for each of you to deposit a ten-dollar note apiece in the treasury of the company. (*Both lock arms again and start to go L.*) What's the matter? Haven't you got ten dollars apiece?

DAN. Do we look as if we had ten dollars?

BILL. Do you suppose if we had ten dollars we'd come looking for work?

SUPT. Oh, I see. You've been out of work so long you have no money. Well, I'll be magnanimous. I'll advance you ten dollars apiece on your salary.

BILL. Mag is kind again. You can't make it twenty.

SUPT. It is immaterial to me; twenty, if you want it.

BILL. Why do you ask for advancement?

SUPT. Merely as a matter of security for your honesty; that's all.

BILL. Oh, I thought you wanted to buy horses.

SUPT. No; we've plenty of horses.

BILL. All aboard! (*Same business as before.*)

SUPT. And you'll also set your watches by the large clock in the tower of the depot. (*Both have dropped their badges again, and start to go off, L.*) What is the matter now?

BILL (*To DAN*). Show up.

SUPT. What—no watches?

BILL. We haven't been on de road long enough.

DAN. You just give us time, and we'll have all those little things.

SUPT. Pick up your badges. I have a couple of dozen watches lying in my safe; I'll loan you one each.

BILL. Just give us a chance on de cars. (*This time tie on their badges.*) All aboard! (*Same as before.*)

SUPT. Here are your punches. (*Bus. of pinching fingers, etc., ad libitum.*) Here are your triptickets. (*Pins one on DAN.*)

BILL. Oh, I want one of them.

SUPT. Yes, you shall have one. (*Pins one on BILL'S coat.*) Now, those red slips are for children, and the white slips for adults.

BILL (*to DAN*). You understand? The red slips are for children, and de white is for de Dutch.

SUPT. No, no; for adults—grown people.

DAN. You don't know noffin'. De red slips are for children, and de white for de ducks.

SUPT. Now, when a passenger gets on the car and pays his fare, punch a hole in one of those coupons.

DAN. S'pose I punch 'em all out?

BILL. Punch 'em in again.

SUPT. In case you run out before the trip is over, make a memorandum in the lapels of your coat.

DAN. Who finds coats?

BILL. Hush — say noffin'; we'll find coats.

SUPT. Now come this way, and I'll show you your cars. (*Starts to go, when BILL says, "All aboard!" Same bus. as before. Exit SUPT., and they follow. Change to*)

SCENE 2. — *A street in four. Two practicable horse cars, R. and L. at back, one labelled "Asylum," the other, "Cemetery," Nos. 46 and 47 respectively. Scene opens with SUPT. discovered on street. BILL and DAN come on.*

SUPT. (*to BILL*). There's your car (*points to R.*), and here is yours (*points to L.*).

BILL (*to DAN*). You got the cemetery; you carry all de dead-heads.

DAN. You carry all de dead beats.

SUPT. Now, boys, here is an order I want you to have strictly enforced; that is, allow no smoking on the platform. (*They repeat.*) No trunks, no drunks, no dogs, no bundles, no washerwomen coming with large baskets of clothes to clog up the car. We won't have them. Now go to your respective cars, and let me hear a good report of you when you come in to-night. (*Exit SUPT.*)

(*DAN and BILL go to their cars, ring the bell, and shout "All aboard!" Enter SILENT FIEND, R. I. E., dressed bad, and has a bad face; goes towards cars mysteriously, looks in each. DAN and BILL watch him closely as he goes off L. I. E. POLICEMAN walks across stage, also NEWSBOY selling papers and shouting some horrible accident. Enter FOP, R. I. E.*)

FOP. Ah, conductor, I want to go — (*Both grab FOP; he finally goes on car platform, smoking cigar.*)

BILL (*sees him*). Say, Dan, the man say no smokin' on de platform.

DAN. Dat's so. (*Goes to FOP, and says quietly.*) No smoking on the cars. (*This is said twice; FOP takes no notice of them, but continues smoking; then DAN very loudly repeats.*) No smoking on the cars!

FOP (*looks at DAN*). Oh, I beg pardon.

(*Throws cigar to the front of stage; DAN, BILL, POLICEMAN, and NEWSBOY rush for it; in the scuffle DAN gets it, and puts it in his mouth, and goes on his car; same bus. as before. Enter CONSUMPTIVE, very emaciated, and coughing very hard. DAN and BILL go to grab him, see what a pitiable sight it is, then go to their places again. The man goes to DAN, who gently leads him to BILL'S car, which says "Cemetery" on it. BILL leads*

him in his car. Rings bell and shouts, "All aboard!" Enter WOMAN with child in her arms. DAN and BILL struggle for them; finally DAN takes WOMAN, who is screaming, to his car, and BILL throws the baby over his car; then go to their places again on the car. Ring bell, etc. Enter two WASHERWOMEN with large baskets of clothes, and both struggle to get on DAN'S car. BILL tries to persuade one to his car; this is worked up very spirited; finally the women come to front fighting. DAN takes one basket and throws it in his car; BILL does the same; the POLICEMAN attempts to arrest the women, and they beat him off, when he grabs the NEWSBOY and goes off, L. H., the women in the cars. In this scene can be introduced any feature that will get a laugh, but there must be no drag. Arrange the characters so they will follow each other rapidly, the last being the FOP coming from the car.)

FOP. Stop the car, conductor; I've been robbed!

DAN. Where was you robbed? Police!

FOP. In the car. They caught him, and are waiting for the police.

BILL. Then they'll have a long wait. *(All rush in DAN'S car, shouting; DAN and BILL come from the car, bringing a dummy man, which they pull apart at the waist; they throw the pieces in their cars, ring bell, shout, "All aboard!" The POLICEMAN rushes on, general struggle to get in cars until)*

CURTAIN.

SCENES IN A SANCTUM.

CHARACTERS.

MR. FOOZLE, *Editor of the "Ballanceville Banner."*

SHADOW, *his clerk.*

THEOPOLIS GIMCRACK, *a boarding-house keeper.*

JOHN GILLUM, *a politician.*

BILL BLOODTUB, *a prize-fighter.*

BARNEY PATTEN, *Editor of the "Beaver Dam Bugle."*

PROPERTIES.

Large table with writing materials, paper, newspapers, etc., on it, L. H. Easy chair beside it. High desk and stool, R. H., with loaded pistol in it. Paper money for characters. Bottle of medicine done up in nice paper. A package, also a check for PATTEN. A lot of stuffed sausage-guts, large size, blown up to represent clubs. Paper window in flat, L. H.

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SCENES IN A SANCTUM.

Scene I.—*Interior of Editor's sanctum sanctorum. High desk and stool; table with writing materials, newspapers, etc., easy chair. Sign, "Ballanceville Banner," MR. FOOZLE and SHADOW discovered. FOOZLE on easy chair, SHADOW on stool.*

Foosle. Write, write, from morning until night. Curious world this—curious people; and their occupation! It is hard to tell what occupation to embark in, or to find what occupation is the most profitable. Here I have been a farmer, then a lawyer, now an editor. I have had a hard row to hoe in each of those professions. Now I have started the "Ballanceville Banner," or, in other words, the "Banner" has started me. Every one wants credit in the paper. Now if I could make enough on advertisements to sell out, I would leave the "Ballanceville Banner" to be hung out by some one else, while I would balance out to more congenial climes. (*To SHADOW.*) Shadow!

Shadow (*who looks very weak and emaciated, comes slowly to table*). Did you call, sir?

Foosle. Yes, I called, sir. Shadow, how do you feel to-day?

Shadow. I don't feel any better.

Foosle. Well, here's a gross of Chattie pills. Take two boxes every half hour, and you'll soon find relief. Perhaps you'd better see a doctor?

Shadow. I did go for one, but I hadn't any money to see him with.

Foosle. Try those pills; they'll fix you, I guess.

Shadow. Yes, sir; I'll try 'em. (*Starts to go; suddenly stops.*) Say! can't you let me have fifty cents? I want to buy a yard of porous plaster.

Foosle. All right, Shadow. Take this notice upstairs, and when I get the money for it I will give you your wages.

Shadow. Thank you, sir.

[*Coughs and exit door in flat.*]

Foosle. That poor fellow has worn himself to a shadow look-

ing to me for his wages. I don't see any way just yet to pay him.

Enter GIMCRACK, door in flat.

Gimcrack. Good-morning, sir, good-morning. Am dis de place whar dey put people in de paper?

Foosle (*mocking him*). No, sir, dis am not de place whar dey put people in de paper. This is a printing office where we insert advertisements at so much a square.

Gimcrack. I don't want to put a square of houses, you block-head, in de paper; I only want to put my boarding-house in, dat's all.

Foosle. Oh, I understand; you wish me to write up something for you?

Gimcrack. No, sir; no, sir. I am all right and my boarding-house is all right.

Foosle. But, my dear colored friend and brother——

Gimcrack. Dear colored friend and brother! Get out—I'm not your brother.

Foosle. You wish me to notice your boarding-house?

Gimcrack. No; de sheriff noticed dat last week.

Foosle. I know what you want; you wish me to insert an ad. in my paper concerning the accommodations of your first-class hotel.

Gimcrack. I spect so—yes, sir; yes, sir. Dat's it.

Foosle. You want it in this style? “To the public in general. I take this method of informing my friends and the travelling community that I have opened the——” (*To GIMCRACK.*) What's the name of your house?

Gimcrack. The Snug Retreat, No. 404 (*local*) Street.

Foosle. “The Snug Retreat, No. 404 —— Street, as a first-class boarding and lodging-house, for the accommodation of man and beast.”

Gimcrack. Just leave that beast out, if you please.

Foosle. All right, “for the accommodation of the local and travelling community, etc.” Let's see, what's your name?

Gimcrack. Theopolis Gimcrack.

Foosle. All right, Theopolis, I'll write you up a good ad. and the charge will be five dollars for three insertions, in advance.

Gimcrack. Dar's your money, sar. Now look here. If dat adversity in your paper don't bring me fifty dollars a day in my house, I'll take de law in my own hands. (*Knocks FOOZLE'S hat off table hard.*) You hear me! [*Exit door in flat.*]

Foosle (*picks up his hat*). Why, you impudent scoundrel! That's a nice way to treat a man's hat. I'll fix Mr. Gimcrack. I'll learn him. (*Goes to table and writes.*) “Card to the Public. That detestable and miserable crib on—— Street, known as The

Snug Retreat, has been opened by that despicable negro desperado, Theopolis Gimcrack, under the guise of a boarding-house, but which we firmly believe is to be the rendezvous for thieves, garroters, murderers, and burglars. We would advise the chief of police to keep a watchful eye on that horrible den, which, if kept open, we may at some future date have to chronicle some horrible crime committed there." If that ain't a settler for him I don't know what is. (*Calls.*) Shadow! Shadow!

Enter SHADOW, door in flat.

Shadow. Did you call, sir?

Foosle. Yes, I called. Take this notice upstairs, and tell the foreman to have it set up immediately.

Shadow. Yes, sir. Say, boss, I've took all the pills and I ain't no better. Can't you give me ten cents? I want to buy some cough lozenges.

Foosle. I'll give you some money as soon as the paper is struck off. (*Takes bottle from table.*) Here's a bottle of Mustango Linemento a gentleman left here yesterday. Take that. It may do you some good.

Shadow (*takes bottle. Coughs*). I wish I had a Russian bath. [*Exit door in F.*]

Foosle. Poor Shadow. I'm afraid he won't live more than sixty-five years longer.

Enter GILLUM, the politician, R. I E.

Gillum. How are you, sir? Are you the editor of this paper?

Foosle. I am, sir. What can I do for you?

Gillum. I suppose you know Thompkins?

Foosle. No, sir, I can't say that I do.

Gillum. Well, sir, he's Thompkins, sir. Have you a chaw of tobacco?

Foosle. No, sir; I never use it.

Gillum. Well, I don't want it after it's been used.

Foosle. Your business, if you please.

Gillum. Exactly so, sir; business, sir. Well, you know, Thompkins—I beg pardon, you do not know him—Thompkins is a poltroon. (*FOOZLE writes.*) Put that down, sir. (*GILLUM puts on FOOZLE'S hat and his, a bad one, he puts on table.*) Thompkins is a scoundrel—a political trickster. I want you to write an article stating that Mr. Thompkins is a bribe taker, a vagabond from his party, who ought to be wiped out of existence.

[*Is about to exit.*]

Foosle. But, sir, you have exchanged hats without my consent, sir.

Gillum (*takes his own hat*). Oh, I beg pardon, so I have. You'll write up a spicy article, won't you? Good-morning!

Foosle. Sir, you have forgotten something.

Gillum (*feels his pockets*). Oh, no, I have all I brought in with me.

Foosle. Well, you have forgotten to pay me for the ad.

Gillum. You have my word.

Foosle. Whose word?

Gillum. The word of a politician.

Foosle. A politician's word is no good here.

Gillum (*whispers in his ear*). But, sir, I belong to the ring.

Foosle. For heaven's sake, don't tell any one but me or they'll have you in Sing Sing.

Gillum. What are your charges?

Foosle. Five dollars.

Gillum. All right; here's your money. Now, sir, if that article does not suit me, I'll come in again and break your infernal back. [Exit, R. I E.

Foosle. You'll break my back, will you? I'll see about that. (*Writes notice.*) "Be it understood that a niggardly politician, Gillum by name, came into our sanctum sanctorum and demanded of us to slander and vilify a particular friend of ours. On our refusal to comply with his villainous commands, he, Gillum, made threats to break our back, and misuse us in sundry other ways too tedious to mention. We hereby warn the public against this cent and a half barroom politician. He is a beat, and has been a hanger-on of the defunct ring. And if he had his just dues, he would now be in State Prison for life." There! I guess that will settle Gillum. (*Calls.*) Shadow! come here!

Shadow. Did you call, boss?

Foosle. Yes, of course I called.

Shadow. Say, boss. Doctor Quack just told me that I've got the yellow fever, consumption, liver complaint, and pneumonia, and said if I didn't be careful I would be sick. Can't you let me have fifty cents?

Foosle. Yes, just as soon as the paper is struck off.

Shadow. If I don't get some money soon, I'll be struck off the face of the earth. Say, boss, is electricity good for my complaint?

Foosle. I don't know, Shadow; why do you ask?

Shadow. Because a man told me to go and hang on a telegraph wire.

Foosle. Come now, take this to the press-room. (*Hands paper.*) And have it set up right away.

Shadow (*coughs*). I'll never get no better. I expect every minute will be my next. [Exit.

Enter BLOODTUB, a prize-fighter, R. 2 E.

Bloodtub. Say, are you the snoozer that runs this machine?

Foosle. This is no machine shop. This, sir, is the editor's studio.

Bloodtub. This is the editor's what I. O.?

Foosle. 'The editor's private office.

Bloodtub. I'm fly—I tumble.

Foosle. Don't attempt to fly or you certainly will tumble.

Floodtub. I'll tumble, will I? Well, I'll tumble you first.

[*Strikes at FOOZLE, who dodges.*

Foosle. Oh, heavens! This fellow is a prize-fighter.

Bloodtub. Say, do you know Red-handed Mike?

Foosle. No, sir, I do not!

Bloodtub. What d'ye savye? Don't lie; you do know him.

Foosle (*frightened*). No—yes—I—I do know him.

Bloodtub. I thought you know'd him. I can lick Red-handed Mike, I can, anywheres. I can lick him in a barroom, I can lick him in a church, I can, or my name is not Bill Bloodtub.

Foosle. Say no more. I believe, from what little I have seen of you, you can lick anybody.

Bloodtub. You know I can, and if you don't believe it, get out here and I'll put a head on you as big as a bushel basket in two minutes.

Foosle. My head is large enough now, sir. What can I do for you? Let me see. You wish to fight Red-handed Mike, and want me to write up the challenge.

Bloodtub. That's what I want, old bullet head.

Foosle (*writes*). "Challenge. I, Bill Bloodtub, will fight Red-handed Mike, in a twenty-four foot ring, for a purse of \$500.00, man and money ready, said fight to be governed by the rules of the L. P. R. Put up, or shut up." Will that do, sir?

Bloodtub. Bully, old Tartar emetic.

Foosle. I'll trouble you for ten dollars.

Bloodtub. What for, old stick-in-the-mud?

Foosle. My good friend, for the advertisement.

Bloodtub. Here's your soap. If he don't fight me, I'll come back and chew your ear off. [Exit, R. 1 E.

Foosle. Come back and chew my ear off. We'll see about that. I'll fix him. (*Writes.*) "To the public: A fellow by the name of Bill Bloodtub says he can whip Red-handed Mike. Now we know he is a liar. He hasn't the courage to fight a sick kitten. Now this braggart with his braggadocio better keep out of Red-handed Mike's way, or he may get the pummelling he so richly deserves." There, that's a settler for Bill Bloodtub. (*Calls.*) Shadow, come here quick!

Enter SHADOW, door in flat.

Shadow. Say, boss, who was that fellow that went out just now? He must have good teeth.

Foosle. Why, Shadow?

Shadow. He said he could eat the hinges off an iron safe.

Foosle. Look out that he don't eat you.

Shadow. Say, can't you let me see a ten-cent stamp?

Foosle (*takes from his pocket-book a bill*). Shadow, I have nothing but this fifty-dollar bill.

[*At the sight of it SHADOW falls lifeless to all appearances.*

FOOZLE *throws water in his face, which revives him.*

Shadow. Say, is castor oil good for me, boss? 'Cause I took some out of a kerosene lamp, and I've been *wicked* ever since. I feel as though I would explode.

Foosle. You are getting light-headed, Shadow. Take this to the press-room.

Shadow. How would a champagne cocktail work on me, boss?

Foosle. Kill you in ten seconds. Take that paper upstairs.

Shadow. Oh, I know I'll never get well. [**Exit door in flat.**

Enter PATTEN, R. I E., hurriedly.

Patten (*to FOOZLE*). Sir, not a word—not a word!

Foosle. What?

Patten. Silence! You must know that I run the "Beaver Dam Bugle," or the "Beaver Dam Bugle" runs me, I don't care which. Not a word, sir. I have been tarred and feathered and drove out of Beaver Dam. Will you sell out?

Foosle. I will, sir.

Patten. Not a word, sir. What do you ask for the shop and press, as it stands?

Foosle. Five hundred dollars.

Patten. Not a word. Here's a check for the amount. The "Ballanceville Banner" belongs to me.

Foosle (*aside*). What a lucky sale! (*To PATTEN.*) Success attend you. Good-morning—good-bye.

[**Exit door in flat.**

Enter GIMCRACK; goes to PATTEN.

Gimcrack. Come, sir, how dare you put such a story in your paper about me?

Patten. Let me see the paper. (*Looks at paper.*) That's not my paper, sir.

Gimcrack. You're a liar.

[*Strikes PATTEN with bladder and exit.*

Enter SHADOW ; PATTEN whips him off ; Enter GILLUM with bladder and paper.

Gillum. So, sir, instead of vilifying Thompkins you slander me. Come, sir, what have you to say for yourself? Look at this paper.

Patten. That's not my paper.

Gillum. You're a liar and scoundrel. [*Beats him and exit.*]

Enter BLOODTUB.

Bloodtub. Say! look here! what did you say I couldn't lick a kitten for, say! [*Knocks PATTEN down, kicks him, and exit.*]

Enter SHADOW ; PATTEN drives him off ; re-enters and goes to high desk ; taps desk with his left hand while holding a pistol in his right ; PATTEN comes down stage holding SHADOW.

Patten. You know what I do to a man that sends a lot of lunatics to beat me?

Shadow. No, what do you do?

Patten. I pull his nose! (*Pulls SHADOW'S nose.*) When I get real mad, I pull it again. (*Does so.*) When I can't control myself, I pull it again. [*Does so, then goes up stage mad.*]

Shadow (*goes and takes PATTEN by the ear and comes forward*). You know what I do to a man that pulls my nose?

Patten. No; what?

Shadow. I smack him in the jaw. (*Does so.*) And when I get real mad, I smack him again. When I can't control myself, I smack him again.

[*PATTEN blows him over ; SHADOW shoots pistol. As PATTEN runs off, SHADOW follows ; re-enter PATTEN, SHADOW, and all characters ; general row.*]

CLOSE IN OR CURTAIN.

SUBLIME AND RIDICULOUS

A Negro Act

AS PERFORMED BY SCHOOLCRAFT AND COES

ARRANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL AS FIRST PRODUCED IN SAN
FRANCISCO, JUNE, 1864

BY

GEORGE H. COES

CHARACTERS.

(San Francisco, June, 1864.)

TRAGEDIAN WALTER BRAY
JULIUS, a comedian BILLY BIRCH
MANAGER GEO. H. COBS

Time of representation, 20 minutes.

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REMARKS.

There are a great many good points that can be introduced into this act, so that the performer need not confine himself strictly to the text, especially in all of the Tragedian's business. Any words he can think of to introduce without interfering with the speeches from "Hamlet," so much the better; and even in the scene with the Manager, it can be changed after they become familiar with each other. This act was a tremendous hit in San Francisco, and was a favorite act at all times. — Geo. H. Cobs.

SUBLIME AND RIDICULOUS.

SCENE. — *A Wood in 3.*

(*Enter MANAGER, L. 2 E.*)

MANAGER. Now, I've just got my new theatre completed, and my company engaged, except one man. I want a light comedian. If I could only find some one out of an engagement, I could do well by him.

(*Enter JULIUS, L. 1 E., hurriedly, and cross to R.; MANAGER stops him.*)

MAN. Hallo, young man, where are you going?

JULIUS. I'm going down street here to work. I got a job.

MAN. What kind of a job?

JUL. I'm an artist.

MAN. What kind of an artist?

JUL. I'm a painter.

MAN. Oh, you're a painter, hey? What are you going to paint?

JUL. I'm going to whitewash a fence.

MAN. I think I can give you a better job than that.

JUL. Can you? What is it?

MAN. Did you ever act?

JUL. Yes; I acted like a thundering fool this morning.

MAN. No, no; I mean, did you ever act upon the stage?

JUL. You just set behind four horses with me once, and I'll take you over the summit faster dan Hank Monk did Horace Greeley when he went to California.

MAN. No, no; I don't mean a stage-coach, I mean a stage where they act — where they represent Shakespeare, Lord Byron, and all them great writers.

JUL. Yes, Shakspeke, Bay Rum — oh, yes. I know; you mean a *freatre* stage.

MAN. Now, I want a light comedian.

JUL. What, to light lamps?

MAN. No. I want a man to play light parts.

JUL. Well, I'm a pretty good shape. (*Shows himself.*) How will I do? I'd make a healthy lover.

MAN. Your shape is all right ; how's your study ?

JUL. Oh, I'm gay on the study.

MAN. Now listen. I have just got my new theatre done and my company all engaged, and I'm going to open in the play of "Damon and Pythias."

JUL. Who'll pity us ?

MAN. Don't you understand ? "Damon and Pythias." Did you never see that play ?

JUL. Yes ; how does it go ?

MAN. I'll tell you. Now, I want you to play the part of Lucullus.

JUL. Look-all-of-us ? Who's he ?

MAN. Listen ; I'll explain this piece to you.

JUL. Go it.

MAN. Now, you see, Damon and Pythias are two great friends.

JUL. Yes ; they'll lend each other nineteen dollars on a twenty-dollar gold-piece any time, won't they ?

MAN. But Damon has committed some great offence against his state, and he is arrested, tried, and sentenced to death.

JUL. Poor fellow !

MAN. After he receives his sentence, he asks permission to visit his family, who reside some fifteen or twenty miles in the interior.

JUL. Yes, I know ; out here in (*local*). I know where it is.

MAN. Pythias agrees to remain as hostage for Damon.

JUL. Oh, Pythy, he's a hostler.

MAN. No, no ; that is, Pythias remains in Damon's stead, so if Damon doesn't get back in time, Pythias hands in his checks.

JUL. Why don't he put 'em all on the jack, and call the turn ?

MAN. The court gives Damon fifteen minutes to go and come back. Damon has a horse, and you are his servant, Lucullus. You are very much attached to him. He gives you lots of money, clothes, etc.

JUL. He does, hey ? Well, couldn't he advance me a few stamps ? I could play this part much better with a little encouragement.

MAN. Oh, he'll give you lots of it. Now, when he arrives out at his house —

JUL. Yes, out in (*local name, as before*).

MAN. He gives you his horse to hold ; and, while he is gone into the house, you kill his horse, because you don't want your master to be killed. So you kill his horse so he can't get back to be executed.

JUL. But where is the horse ?

MAN. Oh, he'll have a horse. Well, after he has seen his family, he comes out to where you are, very much excited, and says to you, "Lucullus, where's my horse ?" and you say, "I slew your horse."

JUL. Yes, but I ain't got the horse.

MAN. But you will have in the play. He says, "Lucullus, where's my horse?" and you say, "I slew your horse;" and that is all you have to do. Now I will personate Damon, to show you how he will come on. You stand over there (*R. of stage*), and I'll go here. Now look out and recollect your cue.

(MANAGER *exits R. 2. E., and rushes on tragically.*)

MAN. Lucullus, my horse!

JUL. Hey?

MAN. Hey? Did I tell you to say hey? I told you to say, "I slew the horse."

JUL. Yes; but I ain't got no horse.

MAN. Well, can't you suppose you slew the horse?

JUL. Oh, you want me to suppose I slew your horse?

MAN. Yes.

JUL. Well, go it again.

(*Exit MANAGER as before.*)

MAN. Now be careful this time. (*Rushes on as before.*) Lucullus, where's my horse?

JUL. I suppose I slew your horse.

MAN. (*very mad*). Can't you say, "I slew your horse," without the suppose?

JUL. Of course I can. What's the use of getting mad?

MAN. Now I'll show you once more. Now look out. (*As before.*) Lucullus, my horse, my horse! Quick, I say! My horse!

JUL. I slew your horse without the suppose.

MAN. (*very mad; both walk across stage*). Oh, get out! You won't do at all. I can't learn you anything.

JUL. Give me one more chance, and if I don't do it this time, I hope to borrow a half a dollar of you.

MAN. Well, one more chance. Now recollect — I slew your horse.

JUL. What you want is, you want a straight slew.

MAN. Yes.

JUL. Well, now you go it again.

MAN. (*exit as before, and enter*). Lucullus! Quick, my horse!

JUL. I — slew — your — horse!

MAN. There; that's it. (*Both shake hands.*)

JUL. Oh, I knew I could suit you, only give me a chance. But what do I get for slewing de horse?

MAN. Well, if you play this well, I give you fifty cents the first year, and at the end of that time, if you'd like to stay, I'll raise you.

JUL. Fifty cents a year?

MAN. Yes.

JUL. And I suppose if I'm prudent and economical and saving,

in the course of ten or fifteen years I'll have as much as a dollar or so.

MAN. Oh, you'll have lots of money throwed on to you by the audience every night.

JUL. Will I? (*Looks at audience.*) Don't throw now, for I couldn't accept it no way, just now. (*Dodges, as if some was coming.*) Don't! don't!

MAN. Well, what do you say? Will you take the engagement?

JUL. Well, boss, I don't care if I do try this job for a year or two. But where is this rooster I am to be with?

MAN. Rooster? He's no rooster; ~~he~~ is a splendid actor. He is now down stairs in ~~the~~ Green Room. I'll go and tell him to come up, and you can rehearse the piece right here. (*Is going.*)

JUL. (*catches MANAGER and pulls him back*). Say, what kind of a chap is this? Is he robust? What does he do to me when I say, "I slew your horse"? Does he touch me?

MAN. Oh, yes! He's very powerful, and gets very much excited. He comes on and grabs you this way (*takes JULIUS by both coat collars*), and chucks you up in the air two or three times, throws you down on the stage, juggles you around, and breaks an arm or a leg. Why, he has been known to kill twenty or thirty men playing this piece!

JUL. Good-morning. (*Turns to go.*)

MAN. Hold on! What's the matter?

JUL. Come to think, I don't believe I could suit him.

MAN. Oh, I was only joking.

JUL. Was you, though?

MAN. Yes; that's all. He's very weak.

JUL. Very weak? (*Braces up.*)

MAN. Very sick.

JUL. Is he very sick?

MAN. He don't weigh more than seventy-five pounds.

JUL. Is that all? (*Squares off à la Sullivan.*)

MAN. Yes.

JUL. He is very sick, is he? Has he had a doctor?

MAN. Why, yes; he's had a doctor five times a day for four weeks.

JUL. He must be sick.

MAN. Yes.

JUL. Show him up. (*Very brave.*)

MAN. All right. Now recollect your cue.

JUL. Oh, I'm all right. I can lick any sick man that don't weigh more than seventy-five pounds. Show eleven of 'em up. (*Looks off R.*)

(*During this time TRAGEDIAN enters, L. 2 E., and stands C. of stage with domino. As soon as JULIUS sees him, he throws off domino, and both strike attitude. Then JULIUS retires down to R. of stage, and TRAGEDIAN immediately commences "HAMLET'S soliloquy."*)

TRAG. Angels and ministers of grace defend us.

JUL. (*to audience*). He looks very healthy for a sick man.

TRAG. Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned —

JUL. You be damned yourself.

TRAG. — Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell —

JUL. He's crazy.

TRAG. — Be thy intents wicked, or charitable —

JUL. I've got nothing for you; go about your business.

TRAG. — Thou com'st in such a questionable shape that I will speak to thee.

JUL. He's going to say something.

TRAG. I'll call thee Hamlet. (*Kneels.*)

JUL. Gimlet?

TRAG. King!

JUL. He calls me King.

TRAG. Father!

JUL. Go away; I ain't your fader. Nice-looking father I'd make!

TRAG. Royal Dane.

JUL. Royal dame — ha, ha, ha!

TRAG. Oh, answer me; let me not burst in ignorance —

JUL. Bust, if you want to.

TRAG. — But tell me why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death, have burst their cerements —

JUL. You'll get spearmint if you fool with this child.

TRAG. — Why the sepulchre, wherein we saw thee quietly inurned, hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws to cast thee up again.

JUL. Oh, what's the matter with you?

TRAG. What may this mean? What may this mean, that thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel, revisitest thus the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous, and we fools of nature, so horridly to shake our disposition with thoughts beyond the reaches of our soul? Say, why is this?

JUL. I don't know.

TRAG. Wherefore?

JUL. What for?

TRAG. What should we do?

JUL. Go about your business; don't bother me.

TRAG. (*rises, still looking on in vacancy, turns to JULIUS*). The fair Ophelia —

JUL. Fair old-feel-er — ha, ha, ha!

TRAG. Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered.

JUL. Go away; I'll mash you.

TRAG. (*getting excited*). I never gave you aught. (*To JULIUS.*)

JUL. Who said you did?

TRAG. Are you honest?

JUL. Yes, certainly I am, you bet.

TRAG. Are you fair.

JUL. No, I'm a Peruvian.

TRAG. I loved you not. (*Walks around stage.*)

JUL. I — don't — care —

TRAG. Get thee to a nunnery. (*Walks around stage.*)

JUL. Get you to a grocery.

TRAG. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?

JUL. I ain't.

TRAG. I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do, crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery — go.

JUL. Oh, if I could only get out of this.

TRAG. Where's your father?

JUL. He's in the State Prison.

TRAG. Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool nowhere but in his own house.

JUL. Oh, he's barred in — for ninety days.

TRAG. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice —

JUL. I've been chased long enough.

TRAG. — As pure as snow —

JUL. S-no use of getting mad.

TRAG. Thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery — go. (*Walks around stage.*)

JUL. Get you to a bummery.

TRAG. I've heard of your paintings, too, well enough. Heaven hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig —

JUL. No, sir.

TRAG. — You amble —

JUL. You lie.

TRAG. — And you lisp and nickname Heaven's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to! I'll no more of it — it hath made me mad. (*Crosses L.*)

JUL. Why don't you go to the insane asylum?

TRAG. I say, we will have no more marriages.

JUL. You better not let the ladies hear you.

TRAG. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are.

JUL. Get, you, you old bummer! Look here, I'm getting mad. Now look out for me; I ain't going to stand this no longer.

TRAG. (*grabs JULIUS à la Othello*). Be sure thou prove my love a wanton. Give me the ocular proof, or, by the worth of thine eternal soul, thou hadst better been born a dog, than answer my waked wrath. (*Throws JULIUS across; all this time JULIUS can say whatever he likes; it is to be worked up very melodramatic until this last speech is over.* TRAG. *retires up stage and looks off*

R.; JULIUS *takes stage L., looking at TRAG., much frightened.*
 TRAG. *advances to centre of stage.*)

TRAG. By the powers, the sun is rushing down the west.

JUL. Let it rush.

TRAG. *(turns to JULIUS).* Lucullus! Quick, my horse!

JUL. Hey?

TRAG. My horse, Lucullus, my horse, I say.

JUL. Oh, what was dat I had to say?

TRAG. Lucullus, my horse.

JUL. I — I — I — slewed your horse.

(Both strike attitude.)

TRAG. Merciful powers! I'm standing here —

JUL. So am I.

TRAG. — To see if the powers will with their lightnings execute my prayer upon thee.

JUL. Execute! He's a butcher!

TRAG. Come!!

JUL. Police!!

TRAG. Come!! *(Grabs JULIUS.)*

JUL. Let go of me now — police!

TRAG. To the eternal river of the dead, the way is shorter than that to Syracuse.

JUL. Let go of me! Murder! murder!!

TRAG. With one fling I'll hurl thee to Tartary, and follow, and follow after; away. *(Throws JULIUS to C. of stage and exit. He lays there until TRAG. is off, then sets up and looks off L.)*

JUL. I slewed your horse! *(Gets up and shakes himself; feels if any bones are broken.)* He's a sick man, hey? He's the healthiest sick man I ever see. He's stronger dan an elephant.

(Enter MANAGER.)

MAN. Well, Julius, how did you get along with that fellow?

JUL. *(carelessly).* Oh, first-rate.

MAN. How do you like him as an actor?

JUL. Oh, he can't act.

MAN. What? You surprise me! Why, he has the reputation of being one of the greatest actors on the stage.

JUL. Oh, he's a bilk; he can't act.

(MANAGER and JULIUS turn aside and wink at audience.)

MAN. What did he do when he came in?

JUL. Oh, not much. He came in here putting on a few scollops. He tackled me a few minutes, and I flopped him.

MAN. What's that?

JUL. I flopped him.

MAN. What do you mean?

JUL. I caught him thus. *(Catches himself by the coat-collar.)*

And thus. (*Catches himself by the seat of his pants.*) And do you see that window? (*Looking off L.*)

MAN. Yes. (*The same time going off slowly R.*)

JUL. I chucked him right through that window. (*Exit MANAGER.*)

TRAG. (*outside, very loud*). Lucullus!!!

(*JULIUS falls upon stage, and TRAG. comes on; both face each other, then back off to first entrance.*)

TRAG. Remember me! (*Exit.*)

JUL. I'll never forget you. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS

A Negro Act in One Scene

ARRANGED BY

GEORGE H. COES

As played by Schoolcraft and Coes

CHARACTERS.

TOM }
JERRY } *Two Servants.*

TRAVELLER.

PROPERTIES.

Two dust-brushes. Carpet bag. A bundle of spoons. Dummy baby. Two cigars. Two glasses containing milk. Two newspapers. Candles and candlesticks n. and l. A dummy man dressed like traveller.

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TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS.

SCENE. — *Plain Interior. Table, C.; two chairs.*

TOM (*enters*). Ah, nobody here? Then I'll wait until the landlord comes. In the meantime, I'll dust up the furniture. (*Commences to dust.*) Strange the landlord don't come. I got a letter this morning to come here to work, and —

JERRY (*enters*). Hello! Are you the landlord of this place?

TOM. Yes; I got your letter this morning.

JERRY. Yes; I got your letter this morning to go to work here.

TOM. I got your letter at nine o'clock, G. N., and I've come to work here. Are you the landlord?

JERRY. No. Are you the landlord?

TOM. No; didn't you send for me to come to work here?

JERRY. Why, no. I've come for the situation myself, so you'd better get out of here.

TOM. I won't do it. The landlord sent me a letter, and I'm going to work here. So you get out.

JERRY. Well, *I'm* here, and am going to work. (*Both commence to dust furiously.*)

(*Enter TRAVELLER.*)

TRAVELLER (*looks around. He has a coat on to strip, and an overcoat with the spoons in one pocket, and dummy baby in the other*). This must be the hotel. Ah, there are the servants.

TOM (*pulls TRAVELLER to L. H.*). Ah, landlord, here I am. I got your letter —

JERRY (*pulls TRAVELLER to R. H.*). I received your letter for the situation. (*Both pull him R. and L., and keep talking to him.*)

TRAVELLER. You are mistaken in the man. I sent you no letters.

BOTH. Ain't you the landlord?

TRAVELLER. No. I'm a traveller, and I want to stop here to-night.

BOTH (*get a chair*). Here, take a seat. (*Put both chairs together.*)

TRAVELLER. Yes; but I can't sit in two chairs at once.

BOTH. Set on half of mine. (*Pushes him down.*)

TRAVELLER. This is very curious; very accommodating waiters surely.

BOTH. Have you travelled far to-day? Where did you come from? Let me take your carpet-bag. (*Both grab it and look through it; then throw it back out of the way.*)

TRAVELLER. I never saw such actions in my life. Very curious servants.

BOTH. Take off your overcoat? (*Both pull it off, and quarrel to see which shall have it. They both feel in the pockets; Jerry pulls out baby; both look and laugh.*)

JERRY. He's from Utah, — one of Brigham Young's disciples.

TOM (*pulls out spoons from the other pockets*). No, it ain't; it's Ben Butler in disguise. (*Throw coat up back.*)

(*TRAVELLER all this time is looking on in amazement.*)

BOTH. Let me take your hat. (*Both grab it and quarrel; finally destroy it.*)

TRAVELLER. Say, be careful of my clothes. Don't tear me all to pieces.

(*BOTH place chair behind the table and try to push TRAVELLER into it.*)

TRAVELLER. You are not aware who I am. I wish to stop here to-night, and would like to see the landlord.

BOTH. He's gone out. That's all right; we'll take good care of you.

TRAVELLER (*to TOM*). What's your name?

TOM. My name is Tom, sir.

TRAVELLER (*to JERRY*). And yours.

JERRY. My name is Jerry.

TRAVELLER. Well, that's very funny. Your name is Tom (*to TOM*), and yours, Jerry. (*All laugh.*) Tom and Jerry.

(*BOTH go R. and L. and bring milk; then quarrel to see if TRAVELLER will drink either one.*)

TRAVELLER. I didn't send you for those drinks.

BOTH. Yes, you did. You said Tom and Jerry, and you must drink mine, and pay for it too.

TRAVELLER. But I can't drink both glasses at once.

BOTH. You must drink some of mine: you ordered it.

TRAVELLER. This is the most singular place I ever got into. (*Drink some out of both glasses.*) Now I will smoke, if you have a good cigar.

BOTH. Yes, sir. (*Both rush R. and L. and bring cigar.*)

TRAVELLER. I don't want two cigars.

BOTH. You must smoke mine. (*Call them any name; quarrel as before.*)

TRAVELLER. Bring me a candle.

BOTH. Yes, sir. (*The same business.*)

TRAVELLER. Now, have you the evening paper?

BOTH. Yes, sir. (*Both get paper; call them what name they like, with the same business as before.*)

TOM. This is the ———. Tells you all what happened to-day.

JERRY. This is the ———. Tells you all the news what happened to-morrow.

TRAVELLER. Yes. I'll take them to my room and read them before going to bed.

BOTH. You want to go to your room? This way. (JERRY takes TRAVELLER R. and explains what a nice room his is; then TOM comes and catches his coat-tail and pulls it off, goes to L., looks around, and sees he has got nothing but his coat-tail; then goes and takes him by the arm and pulls him L., and explains what a nice room he has got for him. Then JERRY grabs the other coat-tail; same business as TOM; then both grab him by the arm and pull him all over stage to R. 2 E.; then push him off and grab dummy and pull it around lively; then they both pull in opposite directions, when dummy parts in the centre; both fall and general confusion. Scene closes.)

REMARKS.

This must be worked up very lively, both talking all the time; only recollect the points written.

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TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL Comedy in Five Acts. Ten males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

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THE AMAZONS Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, not difficult. Plays a full evening.

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DANDY DICK Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half.

THE GAY LORD QUEX Comedy in Four Acts. Four males, ten females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening.

HIS HOUSE IN ORDER Comedy in Four Acts. Nine males, four females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE HOBBY HORSE Comedy in Three Acts. Ten males, five females. Costumes, modern ; scenery easy. Plays two hours and a half.

IRIS Drama in Five Acts. Seven males, seven females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

LADY BOUNTIFUL Play in Four Acts. Eight males, seven females. Costumes, modern ; scenery, four interiors, not easy. Plays a full evening.

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For Female Characters



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forests, and so, of course, know no better. (*Directing the letter—calling.*) Susan!

Arab. I must confess, Anabella, that had he proposed to me, I should, I think, hesitate before I—

Ana. And you would do rightly, for to you, no doubt, the offer would be very tempting.

Aram. (*Aside.*) Now that as closely resembles an impertinence as anything I ever heard.

Enter SUSAN, L.

Ana. (*Giving the letter to SUSAN.*) Bid John convey this letter immediately to its address.

Susan. Yes, miss.

Ana. (*To ARAMINTA.*) As he resides but in the next street, it will not be long before the poor fellow is put out of, or into, his misery.

(*SUSAN is L.C.—ARABELLA L. corner.*)

Susan. Oh, Miss Arabella, how melancholy you do look; you are like me, and London don't agree with you. Ah, miss, I wish we were once more back again at the old house—we shouldn't have to consider long whether we were at home or not. (*Exit L.*)

Aram. (*R.*) Anabella, my dear; may I ask your reasons for having rejected Mr. Muggleton?

Arab. (*L.*) There is, no doubt, one which is all-sufficient.

Ana. (*C.*) Which is—

Arab. That you love him not.

Ana. (*To ARAMINTA.*) Did you ever hear any one talk so ridiculously? Love, indeed! That I should ever condescend to love any male creature breathing, is entirely out of the question! I have, I hope, to great a sense of my own proper dignity.

Arab. How—would you not love your husband?

Ana. I hope not; for that would be to render myself a slave to every caprice of him whom I had chosen; therefore I would keep my heart free and unfettered, that I might compel him always to bow to my whims and wishes.

Arab. I have no faith in your reasoning—it is not of the heart. For myself, I would not wed a prince unless I loved him.

Ana. Then I pity you; for only once tell a man you love him, and he grows so horribly conceited there is no longer doing anything with him.

A CORNER IN STRAIT-JACKETS

A Farce in One Act

BY

AMELIA SANFORD

AUTHOR OF "THE ADVERTISING GIRLS," ETC.

A CORNER IN STRAIT-JACKETS.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. SMARTLY *A lady with a new idea*
JANE *Her office-girl*
MRS. WORRY-FLURRY *A lady who lacks repose*
The three young WORRY-FLURRYS.
MRS. KNOWITALL *Who learns something*
BRIDGET MAGUIRE *With a grievance*
MISS PORTASTER *A literary narcotic*
A discouraged STRAIT-JACKET MAKER.
A resourceful BILL-SCOTTER.

Costumes :— Just as it happens.

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Time in representation, thirty minutes.

COSTUMES.

Ordinary modern dress for Mrs. Smartly and Office-girl. Mrs. Worry-Flurry, pretty afternoon costume, rather elaborate street-dress. The little Worry-Flurries, ordinary dress for little girls; they need not be very little girls. Miss Poetaster, white muslin or cheese-cloth, limp and draggled-looking, hair loose, and wreath of laurel or evergreen in it. Bridget Maguire, gingham dress and apron; large calico sunbonnet. Bill-poster, overalls and rough coat. Miss Knowitall, student's cap and gown.

PROPERTIES.

Typewriter for office-girl. Cook-book for Miss Knowitall. Roll of manuscript for Miss Poetaster. Strait-jackets. These are simply large bags made of any thick, soft material, better unbleached muslin; cut holes for eyes and have a drawstring; they are thrown over the head and tied around the waist, the hands being folded as they are put on, so as to look as if fastened down. Paste-pot and brush for Bill-sticker. Several hand-bills, printed as per directions in play.

A Corner in Strait-Jackets.

SCENE. — *An office. Entrances, R. and in flat. MRS. SMARTLY discovered at a table, R.; OFFICE-GIRL at a smaller table with typewriter a little to her right. In C., toward front of stage, a bench without any back, and two chairs. A large sign up over table reading: —“CIRCUMSTANCES ALTERED TO FIT CASES. A FIT FOR EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.”*

Enter MRS. WORRY-FLURRY, R.

MRS. SMARTLY. Good-morning, madam. What can I do for you?

MRS. WORRY-FLURRY. My name is Worry-Flurry. I saw your advertisement in the Daily Blowhard, and came to see if you could help me. Will you explain what it is you do?

MRS. S. With pleasure. Being, at the tender age of sixty-three, left a helpless orphan in a cold world, and having a large and numerous family to support, consisting of an Angora cat, a canary, and a pet alligator, and fearing that in the pangs of starvation the cat might eat the canary and the alligator swallow the cat — and a family united in this manner is not what I could wish — I resolved to earn an honest living in some way that would benefit the race. The work I have taken up is that of reconciliation. People are always trying to reconcile themselves to circumstances. Now, I make it my business to reconcile circumstances to people. State the unsatisfactory circumstances, call again at a certain time, and I will give you another set, suited to your needs.

MRS. W. Well, here's my case. I believe you are just the sort of person I have been looking for. I have three small children, and they are angels! but for some reason I cannot keep a nursery-maid, and my time cannot be broken in upon by their inconsequent demands. I belong to a

whist-club. You understand that, at a whist-club, every member must be present, alive or dead, whether she can or not. My angels always select club days to fall down-stairs, lose their best hats, or have the earache. My maternal heart is torn by these conflicting claims.

MRS. S. I judge that the circumstances which need adjusting in this case are the children. Leave them here on your way to the whist-club, call again on your way home, and I will tell you what to do.

Exit MRS. WORRY-FLURRY *door in flat; enter* MISS KNOWITALL, R. *Steps up to table with a pompous air.*

MISS KNOWITALL. My name is Knowitall. I have a circumstance which does not fit. My abilities out-run my potentialities.

MRS. S. and OFFICE-GIRL (*loudly*). Beg pardon!

MISS K. My expansiveness is circumscribed by my environments.

OFF. G. Hier wird Deutsch gesprochen — nicht. Kindly speak English.

MISS K. I will try to explain myself more simply. The immutability of my circumstances (MRS. SMARTLY *brightens up*) causes a stagnation of my mental faculties due entirely to —

MRS. S. Quite so. You haven't anything that occupies your mind sufficiently.

MISS K. That is it, exactly. To speak more simply —

MRS. S. and OFF. G. (*together*). Don't! don't speak more simply!

MRS. S. Now this is a very peculiar case. I shall make a note of it. (*Dictating.*) Miss Knowitall, looking for a vocation. (*To* MISS KNOWITALL.) Return in a little while, and learn your vocation. (*Exit* MISS KNOWITALL *door in flat.*)

Enter MISS POETASTER, R.

MISS POETASTER (*advancing to table*). I am a poet. I make soulful poems, but cannot judge of their effect, because, when I read them, the same strange coincidence always overtakes me — the time I select for my reading in every in-

stance turns out to be the time at which my listeners take their daily naps.

Mrs. S. You might give us a reading, and we could then select the best audience and have it here in readiness when you return.

MISS P. (*begins to read. As she proceeds, MRS. SMARTLY and OFFICE-GIRL yawn more and more and gradually fall asleep*).

The sun sets gray in the cold, cold sky ;
 The icicles hang on the tree ;
 At least, if they don't, I am sure that's the place
 Where the icicles ought to be.
 That means it will rain — ah, me ! ah, me !
 And to-morrow is market-day ;
 I have no umbrella, my rubbers don't fit —
 And things always go that way.
 And this is a world where none fares well,
 Unless raising a mortal row ;
 Where vainly I tune my soulful lyre —

(OFFICE-GIRL *snores* ; MISS POETASTER *jumps, looks around, and then at audience with disgusted expression*.)

Drat 'em, they're all asleep now ! (*Exit door in flat*.)

Enter BIDDY MAGUIRE, R.

BIDDY. Bliss me, 'tis the Slapin' Beauty ! 'Tis two av thim ! (*Steps c., facing audience*.) Business must be brisk. (*Turns, reads sign*.) "A Fit for Iv'ry Circumstance." Maybe it's that same fit they're havin'. (*Walks about. Gently touches MRS. SMARTLY, who snores. BIDDY jumps back*.) Save us ! (*Touches OFFICE-GIRL, who suddenly sits up, gives a great yawn and begins writing furiously*.)

BID. (*runs c. ; addresses audience*). What koind of fit is thot ? Wan growls, wan troies to swallow me aloive, and thin goes off by machinery. Faix, if Oi stay here, Oi'll be havin' a fit that'll lave all thim circumstances in the shade. (*Starts to exit, R.*)

MRS. S. (*calls after her*). Wait. Did you wish to see me ?

BID. Are you the circumstance woman ?

MRS. S. I alter circumstances to fit cases.

BID. Well, here's me predicament. Oi don't want anny more of yer fits, but if ye change an onconvanient circumstance to wan more to me loikin', Oi'd do a day's washin' fer ye fer nuthin'. Ye see, Ii live on a strate which is now, it bein' near election-toime, subjected to th' vigilance of th' Boord of Hilth, th' Recordin' Angel, and th' Dishtrict Committee. Jist as Oi get me front walk swept, and th' steps washed up, along come thim Dago street-claners, and dirty it up agin. Firrst, they drive along a machine which partakes of the faytures av a sausage, a bunch av whisk-brooms, and a flea-bitten Skye-terrier; this gathers up th' dirt thot wasn't disturbin' nobody, and shakes it into yer face, and thin lays it in a pile alongside, jist handy fer yez to step in, whin yer after crossin' the strate —

MRS. S. Yes, yes; but what can I do for you? I'm not the Street-Cleaning Commission.

BID. Could yez foind a circumstance that wud kape their dirty ould dust from blowin' all over me clane walk and front steps?

MRS. S. I will attend to it. Jane (*to OFFICE-GIRL who writes on machine*), enter Bridget Maguire.

BID. Inter Bridget Maguire, and inter wan av thim strate-clanin' commissioners, and inter a broom-handle or th' poker, if ye hav ut handy — that's an arrangement that wud warm the cockles uv me hearrrt.

Exit BRIDGET door in flat; enter STRAIT-JACKET MAKER, R.

MRS. S. What can I do for you, madam?

STRAIT-JACKET MAKER. May I ask if either or you is an escaped lunatic?

MRS. S. May I ask what you mean by that?

S.J.M. (*sadly*). Oh, I supposed it was of no use; but I have a mission to them, if I ever find any. My late husband's grandfather was a strait-jacket maker, and my husband often said that if there were more strait-jackets in the world, there would be fewer Anarchists, and German bands —

MRS. S. (*eagerly*). And old maids —

S.J.M. I see you have my idea.

OFF. G. And widows.

MRS. S. and S.J.M. (*glaring at her*). Young woman, were you ever married?

OFF. G. I have not yet taken the fatal plunge. (*Writes.*)

MRS. S. (*aside*). She is rather — you know — queer at times, but she has lucid intervals in which she is extremely useful to me. But go on with your interesting account.

(*They sit together, c.*)

S.J.M. My husband's plan was to invent a new, comfortable, entirely painless sort of strait-jacket, and put it on every one whose actions would not bear explanation. In this way the maximum of peace and quietness would be secured at the minimum of expense, and society would have a chance to settle down into well-ordered channels. Those were his very words. The only way to reach those unfortunates is to hunt till I find them. Hence my question. Nothing personal, I beg you to believe — a mere matter of form.

MRS. S. Oh, not at all. And did your husband succeed with his strait-jackets?

S.J.M. Well, not exactly. The strait-jackets seemed to be all right; but in his ardor he tried on one, and it choked him. (*Cries.*)

MRS. S. (*patting her on the back*). Be consoled. It choked him, you say?

S.J.M. Yes, he never spoke again.

MRS. S. One must always sacrifice something to the cause of science. I think an apparatus that quietly choked off some people so that they never spoke again would really help on the cause of civilization.

S.J.M. I know. Still, one must not try to do too much good at once, and I have arranged and modified this, so that it will only restrain immoderate action. It seems to be only a bag, going by a drawstring, but in reality inside of it is a gag, which renders the person absolutely speechless, and clamps which hold his arms to his sides. He can walk, but that is all. I have a large number of these beautiful strait-jackets —

MRS. S. And you now want to use them on some beautiful lunatics. It ought to be easy. Why, my dear madam, half the world is mad! Return in about half-an-hour, and I will tell you where to begin your glorious mission. (*Exit*

STRAIT-JACKET MAKER. *Enter BILL-STICKER.*) And who are you?

BILL-STICKER. I am an unoccupied bill-sticker. All the usual fences, bill-boards, and sandwich-men are busy advertising the usual things, and people don't notice them. In the stress of modern life, it is only the extremely unusual that attracts attention. I am convinced that I can make a princely fortune if I can only devise a place for posters which has never been tried before. So I had several thousand different kinds of posters sent me, and had one hundred and fifty gallons of paste made. But I can't find an absolutely new place.

MRS. S. Return in about an hour, and I think I can show you some curious objects, on which to post your bills. *(Exit BILL-STICKER. MRS. SMARTLY goes R., turns, addresses OFFICE-GIRL.)* I am going out to lunch. If any people come and seem surprised not to see me, tell them I'm not here. *(Exit.)*

(OFFICE-GIRL leaves table and comes C., as the WORRY-FLURRY children rush in, R., after making a great noise outside door.)

FIRST WORRY-FLURRY. Hello! hello! Mama says you're to give us your loving care, because —

SECOND W.F. *(seizing OFFICE-GIRL by the hair).* We're so gentle —

ALL *(yelling).* And quiet —

THIRD W.F. *(pushing FIRST, who slaps her).* And affectionate —

FIRST W.F. That it's a pleasure merely to look at us!

OFF. G. I will hand on that pleasure to others; I never was selfish. *(Pushing them all on bench, where they sit, backs to audience.)* Now, you be careful. A terrible old witch-woman may come in, who always eats bad children. *(Children huddle together; look frightened; OFFICE-GIRL goes out R.)*

Enter BILL-STICKER.

BILL *(going C.).* Now, where are these curious objects the lady said she'd leave here for me to stick bills upon? *(Turns; sees children.)* These must be them!

FIRST W.F. That's not correct.

BILL. Why?

FIRST W.F. You can't have an object after "be."

BILL. I don't care what the object's after; I'm after the object to post my bills on; so here goes —

(He advances toward them with brush uplifted; children scream and duck as he pastes "TAKE ONE" on the back of each and goes out L.)

BILL. At this rate, I'll have to get more paste. *(Exit, L.; enter MISS KNOWITALL, R.)*

MISS K. *(comes C.; children put their arms around each other, and look fearfully at her)*. I believe I know my vocation without waiting for that tiresome woman. I will be a benefactor to the race. What is it for which the human bosom yearns, more than any other thing? A new cereal. Yes; let the magic words "new cereal" appear before the public eye, and there is a mad rush for the article. I will bend my mighty intellect to the matter. Let me see if I can get any ideas from this excellent though antiquated device, the cook-book. *(Reads.)*

FIRST W.F. *(to others)*. This must be the witch. Do you think she is going to eat us now?

SEC. W.F. It looks that way. See, she is trying to find a way to cook us.

THIRD W.F. Let us appeal to her inmost feelings.

FIRST W.F. Maybe she hasn't any.

SEC. W.F. People usually have them when they eat. Come, let us begin.

ALL *(rising)*. Please do not eat us!

MISS K. *(looking around in surprise)*. Bless me, what sweet little children!

FIRST W. F. *(earnestly)*. Indeed, we are not sweet at all. My papa says I am a bitter pill.

SEC. W.F. Mama says I am a little pickle.

THIRD W.F. My Sunday-school teacher says I am bound to disagree with my elders.

MISS K. Maybe that's the fault of the elders. *(Children brighten up.)* What do they feed you on?

FIRST W.F. Different things.

MISS K. How do you eat them?

SEC. W.F. With my mouth.

MISS K. Your answers show a lack of thought on this important subject. I think I cannot do better than to put in these spare moments preparing you for eating — (*Children scream.*)

ALL. Oh! Oh! Oh!

FIRST W.F. (*getting down on her knees*). Oh, if we only get out of this, I promise to say my "Now-I-lay-me-down-to-sleep" in the morning as well as at night!

SEC. W.F. What is the use of saying that?

FIRST W.F. I thought perhaps she would think she couldn't swallow it.

MISS K. Children, what is the matter with you?

ALL. You said you were preparing us for eating.

MISS K. I will prepare you for eating the delicious breakfast-food I am about to invent.

FIRST W.F. (*getting up*). Oh, well, I guess I won't waste any more prayers on this situation.

MISS K. (*sits, back to audience; children stand facing her*). Now, we will begin. I must tell you about a very wise man who has given the world the benefit of his wisdom. He has devoted years to the subject of eating. What do you think of that?

FIRST W.F. I think he is an old piggy.

MISS K. (*hastily*). Not at all. His discovery will prolong life. Just think, he had devoted years to training himself to eating in this enlightened manner, and at the time he wrote the article, he was still living.

SEC. W.F. (*to THIRD*). How silly. Of course he was living; how could he write if he was dead?

THIRD W.F. (*to SECOND*). He might have used one of the dead languages.

MISS K. He said that the great secret of eating was to take thirty-two chews to every bite. Thirty-two movements of the jaw to every mouthful. (*Impressively*). He went to a restaurant, and ordered oysters. Taking one in his mouth, he masticated it with thirty-two movements of the jaw. What do you think of that?

FIRST W.F. I think it was hard on the oyster.

(BILL-STICKER comes in, L., unperceived, puts label on MISS KNOWITALL, "Mumms' Extra Dry," and goes out, R.)

Miss K. (*angrily*). Oh, you are quite impossible. I shall take you thoroughly in hand. (*Goes L., with children.*)

BID. (*enters R.; comes C.*). Well, where are all thim fits gone? 'Th' ould party that was here tould me she'd be after havin' something fer me to settle thim commissioners with. (*Sees cook-book; picks it up.*) What's this? A cook-book. Well, maybe it'll do to throw at their hids. What's in it, at all, at all! (*Reads.*) "How to tell when meat is good." Ho! the way to tell that is to ate it, av coorse, any fool knows that. "How to make taffy." Huh, I don't want none of yer taffy. "White Sauce — Sit on the stove and kape stirrin'." If ye sit on the stove, ye'll loikely kape stirrin'. Oi don't nade any fool book to till me that. Who's this comin'?

Enter MISS POETASTER, R.; comes down front. Speaks to audience.

MISS POETASTER. Dear Mrs. Smartly has kept her word, and found me an audience. This lady looks wakeful. (*Bows deeply to BIDDY, who folds her arms and looks at her while she reads.*) I will now read a soulful poem, entitled "Where Thou Art." (*She emphasizes the word "dost," BIDDY getting more and more excited.*)

Dost thou remember, dost thou,
The moon's effulgent gleam?
Dost thou remember, dost thou,
The music of the stream?
Dost thou remember, dost —

BID. (*seizing her by both arms*). Dust thou? I'll dust you? Dust Oi do remimber, thin — dust on me dure-steps, and me clane front walk, and me best Sunday shoes.

MISS P. Unhand me, villain.

BID. Niver a bit of it. Oi know what ye are — ye're wan av thim strate-commissioners in disguise — you and yer dust. Niver till me. (*Enter BILL, R.*) And here's another wan. This is me busy day. (*Chases BILL, who runs L.; MISS P. gets up on MRS. SMARTLY'S table, holding a chair up in front of her. BILL slaps at BIDDY with the paste brush, several times; she chases him, R., then L. again; suddenly, trying to back away as he reaches out again with the paste brush.*) Arrah, yer ould paste! Oi can't get away from yez.

BILL. The reason is plain ; you're stuck on me.

BID. Go along wid you. (*Hits at him with her sunbonnet, which slips down over his face, blindfolding him ; tries to get away, but paste sticks ; they go round and round. A double-shuffle would be good, to quick music.*)

Miss P. I think this is a good time to compose a poem. A glimpse of strenuous life always incites me to new efforts. A martial piece would be appropriate. Let me see — "The warrior now, with sword and gun, goes forth to fight his country's " — bun-cun-dun-fun —

Enter STRAIT-JACKET MAKER with package of jackets, and OFFICE-GIRL, R.

STRAIT-JACKET MAKER. She has found some lunatics. (*Undoing strait-jackets ; goes toward BIDDY and BILL.*)

OFF. G. (*to MISS POETASTER*). Do you know where those people came from ?

Miss P. Gun-hun-lun-mun-nun-pun —

OFF. G. You're another. (*Goes L. ; to STRAIT-JACKET MAKER.*) There's another on the table. She thinks she's a Worcester's dictionary. (*OFFICE-GIRL and STRAIT-JACKET MAKER try to separate BIDDY and BILL ; finally succeeding, put on strait-jackets. Dismal groans and growls from BIDDY and BILL.*)

Enter MRS. SMARTLY, R. greatly excited.

MRS. S. Oh, where is that strait-jacket woman ? I know where there is a whole room full of lunatics, not a square away ! Coming up the street, I heard the most dreadful noise in the front parlor of a house, and the fire department and the police were coming, but I told them I knew just what was needed. Run at once !

(*STRAIT-JACKET MAKER gathers up rest of jackets, and hurries out, R.*)

Miss P. Run-tun-wun-yun —

MRS. S. (*turning, looks bewildered*). What ? Oh, yes ; very true, I'm sure. (*To OFFICE-GIRL.*) Dear me, I wish I'd kept one of those jackets here. What is the matter with her ?

OFF. G. Oh, she can't be *deranged*, for she never was *arranged*. She's a poet. (*Contemptuously.*)

Enter MRS. WORRY-FLURRY, R.

MRS. W.F. (*screaming*). Oh, *such* an escape. Dear me, how frightened I was. (*Sees BIDDY and BILL; screams again.*) That fiend has been here, too. (*Wrings her hands.*)

MRS. S. (*to audience*). This is the way, if I step out for a moment. I return to find two people in my office in strait-jackets, and three more who ought to be. (*To MRS. WORRY-FLURRY.*) *Will* you explain yourself?

MRS. W.F. Why, I was at the whist-club. We finished the game, and were discussing some points about which we could not quite agree. (*During this speech MISS KNOWTALL and the little WORRY-FLURRIES enter L., and stand C., listening.*) There was not perfect harmony, I admit; for Mr. Softly had to come to take his wife's place, and he did such strange things, we were quite upset. He played the deuce.

ALL. Hush! such language!

MRS. W.F. But you don't understand —

MISS K. I am glad I don't. (*Looks severely virtuous.*)

MRS. W.F. He trumped my ace after that.

MRS. S. What did you do?

MRS. W.F. I had only one heart, and I gave him that, and —

FIRST W.F. (*to SECOND*). We'll have to look out for mama!

MRS. W.F. And he gave me — *diamonds!*

SECOND W.F. (*to FIRST*). Really, I think we ought to tell papa.

MRS. W.F. If we could only have decided whose fault it was, we would all have felt happier; but just as we were having a little friendly discussion, in came the most dreadful woman, with a species of winding-sheet, which she threw over them all, till a death-like silence pervaded the place, and I fled. (*During the conversation, BIDDY has been edging toward them, coming up to MISS KNOWTALL; leans against her suddenly. MISS KNOWTALL falls forward, upsets the little WORRY-FLURRIES, who also fall forward.*)

MRS. W.F. (*picking them up, faces MISS KNOWTALL fiercely*). You dreadful woman! What are you doing to my children?

MISS K. (*getting up*). Don't speak to me; I feel upset.

(*BILL starts toward them.*)

MRS. S. (*backing away*). Really, I think these lunatics would be less dangerous in a less restricted condition. It seems to excite them to fury. (*To BIDDY, timidly.*) Luny, dear, do you want your thingummy off? (*BIDDY grunts and whines.*) Come help me, some one.

MRS. W.F. Really, I am sorry for the poor things, but I have a duty to my family —

OFF. G. I'll help you. (*They take off strait-jackets.*)

BID. (*flinging arms about, vigorously*). Well, thanks be to praise, Oi'm aloive. Wirra, but that was a hot situation! Oi thought Oi was goin' to be hung afore me toime! (*She turns about to inspect jackets, which she examines closely. BILL steps up behind her and pastes on bill — "All wool — non-shrinkable." Sets paste-pot down near MISS KNOWITALL, who gives a cry of joy.*)

MISS K. I have it. My new cereal! (*Runs out L., while MISS POETASTER gets down from table, and MRS. WORRY-FLURRY and MRS. SMARTLY whisper together, with their arms around each other. MISS KNOWITALL comes back with large spoon, takes up a spoonful of paste and chases FIRST WORRY-FLURRY with it.*)

FIRST W.F. (*indignantly*). M-a-a-a-ama!

MRS. W.F. (*to MISS KNOWITALL*). I ask you, what are you doing to my children?

MISS K. Madam, be calm. During your absence, I have been endeavoring to teach your children what their systems require in the way of food. Behold the great cereal. (*Holds up paste-pot.*) I shall now devote my time to placing this on the market. (*To MRS. SMARTLY.*) You need think no more about the adjustment of *my* circumstances; I have my vocation.

BILL (*coming forward*). Mrs. Smartly, we have been so constantly occupied that I have not before had time to ask if you have adjusted my circumstances.

MRS. S. You wanted a place for your posters where they have never been seen before?

BILL. Precisely.

MRS. S. I suggest that you mix them into Miss Knowitall's breakfast-food; the only place where we don't get posters nowadays is in our food; suppose you try that.

BILL. There is no place where the various announcements will be so thoroughly digested. I will do it.

Mrs. W.F. And how about me? You have not yet adjusted the conflicting claims of my family and my whist-club.

Mrs. S. Suppose you resign from the club.

Mrs. W.F. (*joyfully*). I never thought of that.

Bid. And how about me?

Mrs. S. You wanted something to lay the dust? (*Leads out MISS POETASTER who frowns and says, "Bay-say-day-fay-gay-hay-lay."*) I advise you to keep this young woman near you; she's composing a lay now that is equal to anything. If she palls on you, send her around to the gas-man; he might like to get a new metre. I am going around to see if that strait-jacket woman stopped the whist-club's discussion; but I expect to find she has her life-work there, and I shall then take a much-needed rest after adjusting —

ALL. Circumstances to such extraordinary cases. (*Bowing.*)

CURTAIN.

THE DAIRY-MAIDS' FESTIVAL

AS ARRANGED BY

MAY NEAL

BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

PREFACE

THE constant demand for small entertainments of an unpretentious sort—something that will come within easy range of amateur talent, and at the same time contain an element of novelty and picturesqueness—has led me to think that this embryo operetta may find a welcome, and be of some small use. It does not claim that it can stand alone; but, having proved itself a successful auxiliary to one church bazaar which borrowed its name, it ventures forth in that capacity to ask a trial from strangers.

That the music is not given with the words is due to the obvious and embarrassing fact that it had all been copyrighted too soon. But this seeming drawback is, indeed, one of the advantages of the entertainment; for the operetta is already half learned, and its success already half won, by being set to familiar and favorite airs.

Appended to this little book is a brief description of bazaar booths, given in explanation of the "Choral March," and because it may contain a few ideas of service to those who are engaged in the good work of making charity attractive.

MAY NEAL

Sept. 17, 1887.

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BY WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

THE DAIRY-MAIDS' FESTIVAL.

DIRECTIONS.

WHEN this little entertainment is used in connection with a bazaar, the dairy-maids' cottage should be situated in the left-hand corner of the hall, near the platform or stage. From the cottage gate a narrow incline walk should be built (two planks wide is sufficient), following the stage, so that the dairy-maids marching up it will land on the stage at the right side.

There may be anywhere from twenty-five to fifty milkmaids; indeed, it is impossible to get too many, especially if it is desired to give the bazaar a decided dairy-maid complexion.

Singing the "Choral March," the maids start in single file from the cottage garden up the "hill," walking with a swinging pace, and carrying their milking stools under their arms, and their pails on their shoulders. Reaching the platform or stage, which is set with outdoor scenery, if any, they march in evolutions, starting down the "hill" again at the last verse. When the procession is a long one, the song can be sung twice.

After returning from the march, they pass through the cottage, back to the wings by the side door, and begin to saunter to and fro across the stage, as if going to work; some loitering, some stepping briskly: till finally the "three little milkmaids" come tiptoeing out, and sing their trio with appropriate gestures, each starting off as she bethinks herself of helping Little Bopeep; the final lines being sung as they bow themselves out.

The curtain drops just long enough to permit the arrangement of the Bopeep tableau. The same surroundings suffice, with the addition of a green knoll, which can be made with a

mattress bolstered up at one end, and covered with a dark-green cloth, with loose branches strewn over and around it. The curtain rises discovering Bopeep asleep on the knoll, while the three little milkmaids, approaching from different directions, sing the first verse of the Bopeep song behind the scenes; they appear at the second verse. Bopeep awakens during the third verse, and is led off weeping at the fourth verse; two little maids supporting her, and one carrying her crook. Thereupon milkmaids pass back and forth irregularly, till Betty comes on, singing "Co', Bossy" as she comes, and leaves, still hunting her cow, and echoing the last "Co', Bossy" behind the scenes. More milkmaids pass; then Daisy, a diminutive maid, appears from one side, and Joe, a very small cow-boy with a very large pitchfork, from the other; they sing their duet, and the deserted and disconsolate Daisy departs as the curtain descends.

In the "Churn Medley" the stage is set for a garden scene, with latticed summer-house at the back. This can be easily made by tacking lath on a light framework the size of a door (three frames are enough, and they should be so joined as to leave an opening front and back). A roof is not necessary, and green branches thrown over and twined in the lattice give it a very rustic look.

All the milkmaids appear in this scene. They should be grouped prettily, a dozen or so churning, the churns wreathed in flowers (paper flowers serve); the rest working with butter-bowls and ladles; some sitting, some standing, while half the market-maids retain their pails.

The curtain rises disclosing the maids merrily working, and singing the "Churning Song." It should be remarked here, that the whole of the "Churn Medley" is to be sung in the same key (E natural) and in the same time (three-fourths), though, of course, the movement should be varied; and that the "Churn Chorus," repeated after each number, forms the only interlude. This point should be given particular attention, since it is the measured recurrence of this refrain which makes the whole medley catching.

The sopranos sing the solo part of the "Churning Song ;" and after the refrain, a dozen or more maids, with bowls on their heads and pails on their shoulders, start off to market, during the "Market Chorus." They enter through the summer-house, and circle around the stage or platform twice, taking places in the background during the next "Churn, churn." Betty then comes forward, and during her little solo the milkmaids listen. "Driving Home the Cows" is sung by all. Polly then welcomes "cousin Bopeep," who enters after the first three lines, and is led to a seat by Polly, still singing, while Daisy offers her a cup of buttermilk, and the "Churn, churn" goes on.

"Our Cheeks are as red as a Rose" is sung by Betty, Polly, Molly, and Dolly, who step to the front, making a courtesy with hands on hips. All join in the chorus, and the last "Churn, churn" precedes the finale, "See, the Jersey Lily comes."

The Lily is a tiny maid dressed all in yellow, and standing in the middle of a large white calla. This is made by taking a board three feet square, and fastening upon it a wire framework four feet high, shaped like a calla lily, and covered with white cotton flannel. The board is then screwed upon a small dry-goods truck, and Joe wheels the "star" upon the stage, while the red lights are turned on, and the curtain falls.

NOTES.

This little entertainment could be given with pretty effect at a garden *fête* ; in which case a Jersey cow, decked in flowers, might personate the Lily.

In case there is no bazaar, the "Choral March" may be omitted, and the entertainment begin with the "Three Little Milkmaids."

Bopeep's costume should be a red-and-white striped skirt, green overskirt and waist, red bodice, striped stockings, large straw hat with pointed crown and wreath of wild flowers on it, and a crook.

Joe's costume should be knee-breeches, blouse-waist, red neck-kerchief, large straw hat, and pitchfork.

During the first part of the "Churn Medley" the maids should now and then pour milk into churns, and towards the end some maids with bowls take butter out of churns. This gives a touch of reality and humor to the scene.

THE DAIRY-MAIDS' FESTIVAL

CHORAL MARCH.

(AIR. — “ *The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring*,” “ *Mikado*.”)

THE clover with dewdrops is wet, tra-la-la,
The birds are awake in the boughs;
The meadows with daisies are set, tra-la-la,
As we go a-milking the cows,
As we go a-milking the cows.
So merrily trilling our gay little song,
With hearts full of gladness we're tripping along;
No shadow of sorrow, no thought of to-morrow,
Can sadden our gay little song,
Tra-la-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-la,
Can sadden our gay little song.

The mermaids are selling ice-cream, tra-la-la,
In a wonderful palace of ice;
What cold-hearted creatures they seem! tra-la-la,
And yet they may be very nice,
And yet they may be very nice.
But this is a question which troubles our dreams:
Oh, *where* do they get all their custards and creams?
Some sly little fairy stole into our dairy
While we were a-milking, it seems.
Tra-la-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-la,
While we were a-milking, it seems.

THE DAIRY-MAIDS' FESTIVAL.

Those Japanese girls selling tea, tra-la-la,
Are curious creatures to view;
They're fair, but you plainly can see, tra-la-la,
That *our* cheeks have a rosier hue,
That *our* cheeks have a rosier hue.
No doubt in the world but they came from Japan, —
Slipped off from a plate, or stepped down from a fan;
By the look of surprise in their almond-shaped eyes,
Oh, we're sure that they came from Japan.
Tra-la-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-la,
Oh, we're sure that they came from Japan.

You must come to the milkmaids' retreat, tra-la-la,
If you want your own *true* Buttercup.
Those candy-girls *think* they are sweet, tra-la-la,
And they *are*, but they're also stuck up,
And they *are*, but they're also stuck up.
If those girls know what's good for their soft sugar brains,
They'd better look out and come in when it rains,
For a-lack and a-day, they would all melt away;
They'd better come in when it rains,
Tra-la-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-la,
They'd better come in when it rains.

Kris Kringle is coming apace, tra-la-la,
The dear little Gretchens all say;
And a smile on each little Deutsch face, tra-la-la,
Shows the reindeer is not far away,
Shows the reindeer is not far away.
They've hung up their stockings, and planted their trees,
They hear the faint jingle of bells on the breeze;
Won't they tell old Kris Kringle to stop at the Dingle
Dell Dairy with one of his trees?
Tra-la-la-la-la, tra-la-la-la-la,
Dell Dairy with one of his trees?

THREE LITTLE MILKMAIDS.

(AIR. — "*Three Little Maids from School*," "*Mikado*.")

TRIO. Three little milkmaids "all unwary,"
Stealing out from Dingle Dell Dairy,
Footsteps soft and light as a fairy,
Three little milkmaids we.

DOLLY. One loves "the man all tattered and torn,"

MOLLY. One milks "the cow with the crumpled horn,"

POLLY. One little maid is "all forlorn,"

TRIO. Three little milkmaids we.
Three little milkmaids "all unwary,"
Stealing out from Dingle Dell Dairy,
Footsteps soft and light as a fairy,
Three little milkmaids we,
Three little milkmaids we.

DOLLY. We sell buttermilk, yum-yum-yum!

MOLLY. Step right up, my laddies, come;

POLLY. Five cents down is the "total sum."

TRIO. Three little milkmaids we.

DOLLY. One little maid makes butter and cheese,

MOLLY. One tends the cows beneath the trees,

POLLY. One little maiden takes her ease,

TRIO. Three little milkmaids we.
Three little milkmaids "all unwary,"
Stealing out from Dingle Dell Dairy,
Footsteps soft and light as a fairy,
Three little milkmaids we,
Three little milkmaids we.

Oh, have you heard of little Bopeep?

The poor little soul fell fast asleep,

And while she slept she lost her sheep!

Three little milkmaids we.

DOLLY. I'll go and find poor little Bopeep! (Starts off.)

MOLLY. I'll go and tell her not to weep. (Starts off.)

POLLY. Guess I'll go help hunt up those sheep. (*Starts off.*)

TRIO. Three little milkmaids we.
Three little milkmaids "all unwary,"
Stealing out from Dingle Dell Dairy,
Footsteps soft and light as a fairy,
Three little milkmaids we,
Three little milkmaids we.

LITTLE BOPEEP.

(AIR. — "*Sweet Violets.*")

Little Bopeep has lost her sheep,
And cannot tell where to find them;
Let them alone and they'll come home,
Bringing their tails behind them.
Little Bopeep has lost her sheep,
And cannot tell where to find them;
Let them alone and they'll come home,
Bringing their tails behind them.
Little Bopeep fell fast asleep,
And dreamed she heard them bleating;
When she awoke she found it a joke:
Her muttons were still a-fleeing.
Little Bopeep fell fast asleep,
And dreamed she heard them bleating;
When she awoke she found it a joke:
Her muttons were still a-fleeing.

CO', BOSSY!

(AIR. — "*Tit-Willow,*" "*Mikado.*")

BETTY. Oh, where in the world can that wicked cow be?
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!
I've hunted the pastures, and searched o'er the lea.
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!

BETTY. Has any one seen her since break of day?
Has any one heard of her passing this way?
Oh, *where* will I find her, will any one say?
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!

Last night just at milking-time Jamie came by,
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!
With a smile on his lip and a light in his eye.
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!
He leaned down and whispered a word in my ear;
Now, *who* would have thought that my Bossy would
hear?
But she *did*, and is jealous of Jamie, I fear.
Co' Bossy! Co' Bossy! Co' Bossy!

O Jamie, dear Jamie! pray, is it quite kind,
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!
To leave me alone? Please come help me to find
My Bossy. Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!
I've searched for her everywhere since early morn;
I'm sure she is straying all sad and forlorn.
O Jamie! run see if my "cow's in the corn."
Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy! Co', Bossy!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MY PRETTY MAID?

(AIR. — "*Babies on our Block.*")

JOE AND DAISY: —

HE. My pretty little milkmaid, how sweet you look to-day!

SHE. Now, Joe, you know I really don't believe a word you
say.

HE. Oh, yes, you do, dear Daisy, for I love you all the while;
Pray, can't I go along with you, and help you o'er the
stile?

SHE. Oh, no, Joe! oh, no, Joe! (**HE**) Oh, why not, Daisy dear?

SHE. Oh, no, Joe! oh, no, Joe! Alas! I greatly fear
That all the maids would laugh at me. You really cannot go.

Perhaps you may *some other day*, but *not this evening*, Joe.

HE. If that's the way you treat me, why, I see that I have staid

Too long already, so good-by, my fickle little maid.

I'll get another sweetheart. (**SHE**) O Joe! don't leave me now!

HE. I'll help Bopeep to find her sheep. (**SHE**) No, help me find my cow.

O dear Joe, please don't go! Come, help me o'er the stile.

HE. No, thank you, Miss Daisy, I'll see you *after while*!

My fickle little milkmaid, the time has come to part.

SHE. Oh, don't go, Joe! I love you so, you'll really break my heart.

CHURN MEDLEY.

(*Churn chorus. AIR. — "See-Saw Waltz."*)

Churn, churn, churn, churn,

Now it's up and down;

Churn, churn, churn, churn,

Golden butter for all the town.

Churn, churn, churn, churn,

Golden butter for all the town.

Churn, churn, churn, churn,

Cheerily all the day.

We've buckets and baskets, we've stools and we've churns,

To sell to all comers at modest returns;

We've buttermilk sweet, and we've curds and we've cheese,

All fresh from the dairy, so buy, if you please.

Churn, churn, churn, churn,
Now it's up and down.
Churn, churn, churn, churn,
Golden butter for all the town.
Churn, churn, churn, churn,
Golden butter for all the town.
Churn, churn, churn, churn,
Cheerily all the day.

MARKET SONG.

(AIR. — "*Blue Alsatian Mountains.*")

Come, bring the yellow butter, and curds and creams and whey,
Down to the rustic village, for this is market-day,
For this is market-day.

Oh, come across the meadows, where the lads are making hay,
And down the shady roadside, for this is market-day.

Away, away, away,
You milkmaids blithe and gay ;
Come, bring the yellow butter,
And curds and creams and whey.

Away, away, away,
You milkmaids blithe and gay ;
Come, merry, merry milkmaids,
For this is market-day.

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, etc.

BETTY'S SONG.

(AIR. — "*Hush, Little Baby, don't you Cry.*")

Hark, pretty milkmaids. What do you think !
I saw, as the sun was beginning to sink,
Down near the haystack by the green gate,
A sly little dairy-maid meeting her fate.

She leaned on the wicket, and hummed a gay tune
 About an old cow that jumped over the moon;
 Then, turning round with a sly little start,
 She *kissed* the big milkman who drives the cart!
 O my heart! O my heart!
 She *kissed* the big milkman who drives the cart!

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, *etc.*

DRIVING HOME THE COWS.

(AIR. — “*Nancy Lee.*”)

Oh, when the sunset skies are glowing bright,
 We wander along with laughter and song;
 The world can never know our hearts' delight,
 When driving home the cows.
 With movements slow,
 They onward go
 Adown the stream,
 And stop to drink
 Upon the brink,
 And stand and dream.
 Their patient eyes
 So wondrous wise
 And tender seem,
 When driving home the cows.
 Oh, when the sunset skies are glowing bright,
 We wander along
 With laughter and song;
 The world can never know our hearts' delight,
 When driving home the cows.

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, *etc.*

POLLY'S SONG.

(AIR. — "*Lady Jane*" in "*Patience*.")

Oh, look! here comes our cousin Bopeep.
 Have you heard about her sheep,
 When up she took her little crook
 Determined for to find them?
 The poor little soul would take no rest:
 She wandered east and she wandered west.
 She found them, indeed, but it made her heart bleed,
 For they'd left their tails behind them.
 For they had left their tails,
 They'd left their *tails* behind them.

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, *etc.*

OUR CHEEKS ARE AS RED AS A ROSE.

(AIR. — "*He's going to marry Yum-Yum*," "*Mikado*.")

BETTY, POLLY, MOLLY, and DOLLY:—

Oh, our cheeks are as red as a rose,

CHORUS. Rose, rose.

BETTY, *etc.* So come to the dairy

If you would be merry,

And learn how sweet buttermilk grows,

CHORUS. Grows, grows.

Come join in our frolic and glee.

BETTY, *etc.* For although we're not decked in fine clothes,

CHORUS. Clothes, clothes,

BETTY, *etc.* We're all of us pretty,

And some of us witty

As wit among dairy-maids goes,

CHORUS. Goes, goes.

So come to the dairy and see.

BETTY, *etc.* Our cheeks are as red as a rose,

CHORUS. Rose, rose,

BETTY, *etc.* And though we're not decked in fine clothes,

CHORUS. Clothes, clothes,

We're all of us pretty, and some of us witty,
And happy as happy can be.

Chorus. Churn, churn, churn, churn, *etc.*

THE JERSEY LILY.

(AIR. — "*Read the Answer in the Stars.*")

See, the Jersey Lily comes!

Moving proudly from afar;

See, the Jersey Lily comes!

(Repeat). Read your answer in the star.

DESCRIPTION OF BAZAAR BOOTHS.

DINGLE DELL DAIRY.

This should be a low straw-thatched cottage, with latticed windows and running vines. There should be a pretty flower garden for the maids to gather in. A real cow adds much to its attractions.

The dairy-maid costume consists of a plain bright-colored skirt; a puffed pannier of big bright flowered goods; a black or colored pointed bodice laced in front; cheese-cloth waist, with full sleeves rolled up at elbows; bright-colored neck-kerchief, and cheese-cloth kerchief tied three-corner-wise over head (or high Normandy Swiss cap); white Swiss aprons; black stockings and slippers.

For sale : Milk, butter, eggs, cottage cheese, etc.; decorated stools and pails, etc. (The stools and pails carried by dairy-maids sold at auction are a good source of revenue.)

THE ICE PALACE.

This is a square, high framework of wood, with a square battlemented tower run up from one corner. "Castle walls" are not necessary, but the roof is covered with white cotton laid on a network of cords. All the framework is wrapped in white cotton, and icicles are formed by tacking lath in jagged points to the cornice, these also wrapped in cotton. Sprinkle all with isinglass.

The mermaids' costumes are all white, with draperies *à la* Greek, and powdered hair.

For sale; Creams and ices.

THE JAPANESE KIOSK.

This needs few suggestions, as it has its prototype on every fan and parasol. A round affair, with pointed top, whose wares form its decorations.

Costumes copied from any Japanese picture at hand.

For sale: Tea, sandwiches, and Japanese fancy articles.

THE SUGAR CAMP.

This booth, whose framework simulates a tent, has the roof covered with pink muslin; the posts are wound with pink and white tarlatan in stripes, and have festoons of rock-candy swinging between them. A large kettle covered with silver paper, depending from three silver-covered cross-pieces, holds mixed candies. Home-made candies are sold from counters within the tent.

Costumes: Solid colors, with tucked-up overskirts; one chocolate, one candy pink, one lemon, one cream-white, etc. Little square baker's caps of same color should be worn.

THE GRAPE ARBOR.

This is a long, narrow framework, shaped like a covered arbor; the slats wrapped in evergreens.

For sale: Grapes, oranges, bananas, and all fruits in season.

Costumes: Italian-peasant garb, or gowns to match the fruits; apple-girl in russet brown, and orange-girl in orange, with basket of oranges, etc.

THE ART ROOM.

This should be a square enclosure, furnished with rugs and Oriental hangings; the art-work and fancy articles for sale disposed to the best advantage.

High-art costumes: Short Josephine waists, and plain, narrow skirts, in soft materials and aesthetic shades.

THE THREE FATES.

These are the Greek maidens, one of whom sits on a divan with her foot on the treadle of a spinning-wheel, while another holds the "thread of fate," which she is spinning, and the third clips it off with an imposing pair of shears. This "thread of fate" is a narrow ribbon, on which are tied, at short intervals, fancy cards with apt quotations written on one side, while the other bears a mysterious prophecy. These cards are sold for ten cents apiece, and this classic group is usually kept busy.

Costumes : The costumes are, of course, Greek. Light mahogany, pale olive, and medium blue make an effective color combination.

THE NEW-ENGLAND KITCHEN.

This is the restaurant. It has a high, old-fashioned mantel-piece, where pumpkin rinds and sliced apples are hung on a line to dry. The candles and snuffers decorate the shelf, and side by side are the gourd dipper and the eight-day clock. The aroma of doughnuts and pumpkin-pie is not far off; but the appetite of to-day, as well as that of fifty years ago, is catered to, and every thing palatable is sold here, from pork and beans to oyster stew.

Costumes: Check gingham and large white aprons.

THE CHRISTMAS GARDEN.

This, of course, would only be suitable to an entertainment sufficiently near Christmas to make its wares salable.

The garden is enclosed in a low hedge formed of evergreens, and is laid out in stiff rows of small Christmas-trees hung with the decorations and toys for sale. The walks may be made of tan bark. Bunches of sleigh-bells on the trees, convenient to the touch, furnish suggestive music.

Costumes: Gretchen dresses and caps.

A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

A Comedy in One Act

BY

MARY SEYMOUR

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS

A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

CHARACTERS.

LADY DE MONTREVILLE.

SYBIL, *her daughter.*

GWENDOLINE, *grand-daughter to Lady de M.*

ALICE, *a nurse.*

A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

SCENE. — *A drawing-room, elegantly furnished, entrances R. and L.*
L. LADY DE MONTREVILLE *at table R., looking at a miniature.*

LADY DE M. So he looked, just so, with his frank face and chestnut curls, that glistened gold in the evening sun as he turned to wave a last farewell. When I think of him it is not as the baby I nursed, as the schoolboy I regarded with such hope and pride, nor as the son who caused me such agonies of shame and sorrow, but as the man who rode away to his death so gallantly with a smile upon his face. It is thus I always see him in my dreams; but my waking eyes will never really behold him again. Oh! my youngest, my Benjamin, my darling.

(Enter SYBIL hurriedly.)

SYB. Oh! mamma, he is here.

LADY DE M. He — whom do you mean?

SYB. Sir Frederick —

LADY DE M. Oh! I thought —

SYB. Mamma, will you not go down and see him?

LADY DE M. See him to-day? You know, Sybil, I make it a rule never to see visitors to-day. Have you forgotten it is the 21st of October?

SYB. I know, mamma, but I thought you would make an exception in his favor.

LADY DE M. Why, Sybil?

SYB. Oh! mother. *(Crosses to her and kneels beside her.)* He says he loves me. Will you not let him be your son?

LADY DE M. My son! To-day of all days — but I suppose I must see him. *(Rises.)*

SYB. *(timidly)*. Shall I come with you, mamma?

LADY DE M. No, remain here. I shall not stay long with him, and I shall want you to write a letter for me when I come back. *(Exit R.)*

SYB. Oh! I wish it were any other day than this. I know mamma thinks me so heartless for dreaming of — love, or indeed for thinking of anything but poor Gerald. Yet I saw so little of

him while he was alive, and he has been dead for four years now. One cannot mourn forever. (*Takes up miniature.*) He was very handsome — very. I wonder if that is why mamma loved him so much more than she did either of the two elder ones, for both Reginald and Cuthbert have been better sons to her than he was, yet she has always loved him best. I wonder what has become of his wife —

(*Enter LADY DE MONTREVILLE.*)

LADY DE M. His wife — whose, Sybil?

SYB. Oh! mamma, is Sir Frederick gone?

LADY DE M. Yes, I told him I could not speak to him to-day; but he is to dine here to-morrow. But what were you speaking of just now?

SYB. Oh! mamma, of his — of Gerald's wife.

(*LADY DE MONTREVILLE sits down R., SYBIL stands L.*)

LADY DE M. And what of her?

SYB. I was only wondering whether she was alive or not.

LADY DE M. Of course she is, those sort of people live forever. But I have not heard from her lately; and I want you to write to her and tell her to come here.

SYB. Oh! mamma, I am so glad — will you let her see Gwendoline?

LADY DE M. Certainly not, how can you dream of such a thing? While I live, Gwendoline shall never see her mother. It is the aim of my life to forget that such a person exists.

SYB. (*disappointed*). What am I to say to her, then, mamma?

LADY DE M. Tell her I must see her son, my son's son — I must see him — if only for an hour.

SYB. Perhaps she will let him come and stay here.

LADY DE M. I would not have him unless he were to be all mine.

SYB. It would be for his good, and his mother might consent.

LADY DE M. When I first heard of your brother's marriage, I went to his widow and demanded Gerald's children of her. They were mine — at first she refused to part with them, but afterwards she consented to let me have one —

SYB. And you chose Gwendoline.

LADY DE M. The boy refused to leave his mother. He, like her, was of the people, while the girl was my grandchild.

SYB. She is a perfect little lady.

LADY DE M. She is more than that, you were all ladies, you and your sister, but Gwendoline has —

(*Enter GWENDOLINE R., in a riding-habit; she stands behind LADY DE MONTREVILLE; SYBIL begins to write a letter.*)

GWE. Grandmamma, grandmamma.

LADY DE M. Well, my pet, have you done your lessons well?

GWE. Very well, grandmamma ; at least so Miss Bankes says ; and oh ! as a reward, may I ride the new pony ?

LADY DE M. My dear, I am afraid it is too fresh for you.

GWE. Oh ! no, grandmamma, indeed it is not ; besides, I am sure I can manage it. Freeman says I am quite a good rider now.

LADY DE M. Well, I suppose you must have your own way, my darling.

GWE. Oh ! thank you so much, grandmamma. Aunt Sybil, do you hear I am to ride the new pony — will not that be nice ?

SYB. Very. Are you going out soon ?

GWE. Alice is coming to fetch me in ten minutes.

LADY DE M. Ah ! By the way, Gwendoline, how do you like your new nurse ?

GWE. Very much, grandmamma, though she is rather sad, and seems as if she were going to cry very often.

SYB. Rather a melancholy companion, Gwendoline.

LADY DE M. Yes, I must say I should prefer a more cheerful person.

GWE. Oh ! grandmamma, she is very, very nice, and tells me lovely stories, and is never cross.

LADY DE M. I am glad you like her. (*Rising.*) Well, I shall come to the door to see you mount, my dear. (*Exit R.*)

GWE. Auntie, dear, to whom are you writing ?

SYB. To Mrs. Gerald de Montreville.

GWE. And who is she ?

SYB. Oh ! she — married one of grandmamma's sons, dear.

GWE. But which ? not Uncle Reginald, for his wife is Lady de Montreville, and Uncle Cuthbert is not married. Gerald — Gerald — what a pretty name. Aunt Sybil, was not that my papa's name ?

SYB. Yes, your father was called Gerald.

GWE. Then Mrs. Gerald de Montreville must be his wife, and, oh, Aunt Sybil ! my mother.

(*Enter ALICE, R.*)

ALICE. Miss Gwendoline, the pony is at the door.

GWE. The new one, Alice ? Are you sure it is the new one ? Oh ! I am glad. Aunt Sybil, do come and see how well I can manage it.

SYB. Very well, my dear. Alice, will you put those things away. I will take charge of Miss Gwendoline. (*Exeunt R.*)

ALICE (*alone*). A letter for Mrs. Gerald de Montreville. For me. What can it be about ? Ah ! I must not open it and see. (*Arranging the things.*) His portrait — just as he was in (*opens miniature*) those glad happy days when he first told me that he loved me. How long ago it seems. Ah, I have changed sadly. I must have been pretty then, or he would not have cared for me — and he did love me — he did — he did. I was only a miller's daughter, and he was a grand gentleman, but he never loved any

one but me — my handsome, brave husband. (*Kisses picture.*) Ah! she has been crying over it! What right has she to weep for him. She, who robbed me of my child. Oh! my Gerald, mine in death as once in life. When you saw your sleeping daughter, it must surely have grieved you to know that I have no part in her; that she does not know me for her mother; that the very kisses I print upon her forehead astonish and alarm her; that I shall never hear her voice say mother — never feel her arms about my neck. (*Bursts into tears.*)

(SYBIL and LADY DE MONTREVILLE enter R.)

SYB. I do not fancy there is any danger, she is such a very good rider. Oh! Alice, will you take this letter to Edwardes, please?

LADY DE M. No, Sybil; I do not want it posted to-day.

(*Exit ALICE, R.*)

SYB. Will you not send it, mamma?

LADY DE M. No, no. I cannot stoop to ask a favor of that woman. I would bear much to see Gerald's son, but that degradation is too deep.

SYB. Mamma, are you ill? You seem so very exhausted. Do try and rest a little.

LADY DE M. Rest! Sybil, when I am in my grave then I may rest — but (*cries heard without*) what is that?

SYB. (*runs to door*). Oh! Gwendoline has been thrown.

LADY DE M. (*stands up*). Gwendoline!

(*Enter ALICE carrying GWENDOLINE, who has fainted. She puts her in the arm-chair R.*)

ALICE. My darling! my darling! (*Kneels by chair.*)

LADY DE M. (*R. of the chair*). She is not dead?

ALICE. Dead, no. See, she moves. Her eyes are opening. My child, my child —

LADY DE M. Let her have more air, Alice.

ALICE. My little one, my little one.

LADY DE M. Do you hear me, move aside —

ALICE. Oh! let me be —

LADY DE M. What does this conduct mean —

ALICE (*simply, and with dignity*). I am her mother.

LADY DE M. Her mother. (*Steps between GWENDOLINE and ALICE, who rises.*) Her mother.

ALICE. Ah! let me have her — my little one, my little one.

(SYBIL kneels by GWENDOLINE.)

LADY DE M. Your little one! You forget she is mine. She is my son's child.

ALICE. She is mine. You sent to me when I was in sore trouble and demanded her of me. For my husband's sake I let her go to you, but now I want her back again.

LADY DE M. I shall not let her go.

ALICE. Ah! you will be merciful to me. You will let her come with me. She is my own little one and I will have her, or at least you will let me see her sometimes.

LADY DE M. She is mine.

ALICE. You have had daughters and have loved them; have heard their childish talk, have watched their winning ways; have mercy on me; my little daughter is a stranger to me —

LADY DE M. She is my grandchild.

ALICE. Ah! you have so much; riches, happiness, sons, and daughters, and I have only her —

LADY DE M. You have your son.

ALICE. My son. Have you not heard? He died last Christmas.

LADY DE M. Died! My son's son, my Gerald's Gerald. Gwendoline (*after a pause*), comfort your mother. (*Puts GWENDOLINE in ALICE's arms.*) A childless widow.

(*A silence; LADY DE MONTREVILLE sinks in chair R.*)

LADY DE M. We must be friends, dear. Sybil will marry soon — then you must be my daughter instead.

ALICE. Lady de Montreville.

LADY DE M. Yes, friends. (*Putting her hand on the miniature.*) For one dead link unites us in the past, and one living (*draws GWENDOLINE towards her; ALICE clasps the child in her arms*) in the future.

CURTAIN.

ELIZA'S BONA-FIDE OFFER

A Farce in One Act

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY

BY

EMMA E. BREWSTER

**AUTHOR OF "A PRETTY PIECE OF PROPERTY," "ZERUBBABEL'S SECOND
WIFE," ETC.**

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ELIZA'S BONA-FIDE OFFER.

PARLOR THEATRICAL IN ONE ACT.

CHARACTERS.

ELIZA.
BELL BROWN.

TIBBIE.
JESSIE.

SCENE. — *Eliza's room at boarding-school. Eliza writing a love-letter. Bell studying. Enter suddenly Tibbie, in walking-costume; runs to glass.*

Tibbie. Te, he, he! Oh, he, he, he! Do let me see how I look! He, he, he! This side, girls! He, he, he! Pray tell me how I look — he, he, he! — from a side view. He, he, he!

Bell. Quite well.

Tibbie [angrily]. You say that out of spite.

Eliza [looking up from her writing]. I see nothing out of place.

Tibbie. Out of place! Oh, I should think not. Te, he, he! Dear me, — he, he, he! — that's too bad! But I don't care! [*Turning before glass.*] Say, girls, don't you think this hat re-mark-a-bly becoming? He, he, he! For if *you* don't, — he, he, he! — somebody else does. Oh, te he, he, he!

Bell. Who?

Tibbie. Oh, you need n't be sarcastic, Bell Brown!

For — he, he, he! — all the while Jessie and I — he, he, he! — stood listening to the music in the park, — he, he, he, he! — Nick Howard — he, he, he! — stood right off so, and never took his eyes off me! I was tickled, I tell you!

Bell [scornfully]. He never took his eyes off Jessie, you mean.

Tibbie [still giggling]. No, she was on the other side of me! And Nick, he just looked as though he could eat me up!

Bell [laughing]. Yes, because you were in the way and he could not get a fair look at Jessie.

Tibbie [angrily]. Oh, you are jealous! I say, Bell, you're jealous. That's what ails you! Ain't it, Eliza?

Eliza [looking from her writing with a start]. What did you say?

Tibbie. I say Bell is jealous because — he, he, he! — the fellows never take half the notice of her they do of me. He, he, he!

Bell. Tibbie thinks so much of the fellows that whenever she laughs it is all he, he, he!

Tibbie. Well, I'll tell you what it is, girls, I'm just afraid to go out alone, for fear every fellow I meet will propose. Well, now, you need n't laugh! Why, only just the other day I was going down to Crane's & Crammer's — after some sugar mice, you know, and peanuts — and I ran bump against a gentleman coming around the corner! As soon as I saw 't was a man my heart came right into my mouth. I knew he'd speak to me, — and he did! What do you think he said?

Bell. "Excuse me," I hope.

Tibbie [giggling]. No, he never said a word; but he just opened a valise he carried, and asked me if I wanted to buy any spool silk. [*Bell and Eliza laugh.*] Well, I don't see what you are laughing at!

Eliza. It was so funny — funny of him, you know — asking you if you wanted to buy some spool silk. Don't you think it was funny, Tib?

Tibbie [giggling]. Well, yes, it sounds funny. But he was just in sober earnest, and he told me how much he made a year by his sewing silk, and that he was a widower with ten children; and I was fairly scared to death. [*Bell screams with laughter.*]

Eliza. Your situation was frightful, really. Did you call the police?

Tibbie. Oh, no. I didn't want to disgrace the poor man. I've no doubt his intentions were honorable. But I spoke up real sharp and said, "I am indeed very sorry, sir, but you must excuse me. I do not wish to purchase any sewing silk to-day. I really do not need it, and besides, all the money I have with me is dedicated to another purpose." Oh, I was real short with him.

Eliza. I see you were. You conducted the affair with great discretion.

Tibbie. Oh, I'm always real discreet in any affairs of that kind. [*Bell laughs.*] Bell, what are you laughing at? If ever you'd had an offer you'd know just how awful it is.

Bell. Indeed, Tibbie, I have had an offer. I had one the very day I came back this term.

Tibbie [giggling]. You did? Now tell us all about

it. [*Sits.*] Don't you love to hear love affairs, Eliza?

Bell. I don't think I can tell it as well as you, Tibbie.

Tibbie. No, I don't suppose you can, but that's no matter; is it, Eliza? Go ahead.

Bell. You see it was at the depot. He saw me leave the cars, and *marked me*.

Tibbie. Goodness!

Bell. I saw him make a little beckoning motion with his finger, and I looked up.

Tibbie. Oh, he, he, he! You did n't, though! He, he, he!

Bell. Our eyes met.

Tibbie. He, he, he! Now, Bell Brown, if you ain't an awful flirt. Te, he, he, he!

Bell. He asked to accompany me home.

Tibbie. Mercy!

Bell. That is, he said if I would tell him where I was going, he would take me in *his own carriage*!

Tibbie. What impudence! What *did* you do?

Bell. Well, he seemed so honest, and then — his mustache! So I did n't want to make a scene right there —

Tibbie. No, of course not. And I never could resist a mustache! Ain't this real interesting, Eliza?

Bell. So as I say, I got into his carriage.

Tibbie. You did n't, though! He, he, he! Why, I think that was positively awful! Did he say anything to you? He, he, he! I should have been just scared to death!

Bell. He said nothing *then* — not till I was getting out.

Tibbie. Gracious! What did he say then? Te, he, he!

Bell. He — he asked — he asked — for — the — fare!

Tibbie. He did? Asked for the fare? Why, I think that was real mean!

Bell. Not at all! That is his business. How could he afford to drive people about town for nothing?

Tibbie. Oh, oh, I see! I see what you mean, Bell Brown! He was a hackman, and you are trying to stuff me, Bell Brown; you know you are. But I didn't mean an offer like that. I mean a real bonny-fodder offer! Did you ever have an offer, Eliza? a real, bonny-fodder offer, you know?

Eliza. No, not exactly — that is — not yet.

Tibbie. Goodness, see her blush! Now, isn't this interesting? Now you tell us all about it, won't you? Don't you like to hear love affairs, Bell?

Bell. Oh, yes, dearly!

Eliza. Well, now, girls, if you'll promise not to tell —

Bell. Never in this world! Never, never, never!

Tibbie. Never, nover, knock me over!

Eliza. Well, now, girls, you don't think it is horrid to answer personal advertisements, do you?

Tibbie. Why, I don't know. I think it might be imprudent. Don't you think it might be imprudent, Bell?

Bell. Not a bit of it. I should think it would be real fun. I always wanted to.

Eliza. Well, I *did*. And we've corresponded ever

and ever so long. Oh, he does write such beautiful letters! He calls me love, and sweet, and darling, and — oh, dear, girls, am I not blushing? — and I expect an offer every day now.

Tibbie. Oh, ain't this too nice for anything!

Bell. Is he handsome?

Eliza. Just splendid! Tall and dark, broad-shouldered, with black eyes, and dark, curling locks.

Tibbie. Ain't he real pretty, though!

Bell. Not pretty, — magnificent! Will you show us his picture?

Eliza. I have n't got it yet; but you see he described himself to me in his letters, He says he is a true brunette. I told him I was a blonde. I told him that I was n't very handsome — not very.

Tibbie. Well, I should hope so!

Eliza [*with a sharp look*]. But — said I — I am considered the handsomest girl in school; though that is n't saying much.

Bell [*laughing*]. Now you've got it, Tib.

Tibbie. Well, I don't care. I ain't mad one bit!

Eliza. Never mind, Tibbie. I only said it to tease you.

Tibbie. Oh, lor! you did n't tease me any.

Bell. I should think you'd want his picture.

Eliza. Oh, I do. Girls, you can't think how much in love I am! It seems that, could I but meet him, my earthly happiness would be complete. But since that cannot be till I am out of boarding-school, then let me have his photograph!

Tibbie. Be you going to have it?

Eliza. Yes, I am expecting it every mail; he said

he would send his as soon as he got mine. O girls, such a time as I had getting my photograph taken! The trials, the plots and counterplots through which I have passed for Charles Augustus's sake, none can appreciate who have not, like me, been in boarding-school and in love at the same time. [*Rises and walks to front of stage.*]

Tibbie. That's so!

Eliza. You know when I went to New York last month? It *appeared* as though I went after a new hat; now, did n't it? None suspected that I had a more important matter on hand, an affair of the heart; did they?

Tibbie and Bell. No, indeed!

Eliza. But so it was. The pretences by which I baffled the vigilance of Miss Moffat, leaving her at a restaurant with the *most beautiful* Charlotte Russe before her —

[*Girls sigh. Eliza walks across stage.*]

Eliza. Oh, Charles Augustus shall never know what I have borne for his sake! But I tore myself away from Miss Moffat and the Charlotte Russe, pretending that I was particular about my new hat, and had got to examine the stock of every milliner in the city, when in reality I took the very first thing offered me. For why should I care for becoming attire now? [*Walks across stage.*] I only craved time to have a perfect representation of myself taken for my *one lover*.

Tibbie and Bell. Have you got the pictures here?

Eliza [*goes to closet*]. Such troubles as I underwent getting these pictures! First came the negatives. I thought I should die, I was so afraid that some of you

girls would discover what they were, and then I knew the whole story would have to come out. But didn't I watch the mail sharp, to have a dozen photos come and nobody suspect it, — not even Bell?

Bell. Well, I should think so! How did you ever do it?

Eliza [*shows card photograph*]. Do you think it is good?

Bell. Why, I don't think it looks a bit like you! [*Taking card.*]

Tibbie. Goodness, no! you never looked so well in the world.

Bell. I don't think your hair was done very becomingly.

Tibbie [*snatching photograph*]. I never should guess who it was meant for.

[*Enter Jessie with mail, which she allots among the girls.*]

Jessie. Letters! letters! Two for Bell, and a whole handful for Tibbie. [*Tibbie throws photograph on table; snatches letters.*]

Tibbie. Oh, they are all from fellows, I'll be bound.

Jessie. Here is one for Eliza.

Eliza. Oh, it is from — oh! [*Kisses letter, and slips into pocket, making great pretence of hiding her movements.*]

Tibbie. Now I know who it's from! [*Giggles.*]

Bell. That won't do, Eliza! You must show us the photograph anyway.

Jessie. What photograph?

Eliza. Now, girls, you promised not to tell.

Bell. I never will in this world.

Tibbie. Certain true, black and blue, give you a leaf to cut me in two.

Jessie. What is it, girls?

Bell [*showing photograph*]. Do you know who that is, Jessie?

Jessie. Oh, it's Eliza! Isn't it perfect? When did you have it taken?

Eliza. Well, I had it taken that day I went to New York with Miss Moffat to get my new hat. It *appeared* as though I merely went for a new hat; but in reality I went to have my picture taken to send to *my lover*!

Jessie. Your lover! Have you got a lover?

Bell. Oh, yes, and he is just splendid. Black-eyed, tall—

Tibbie. Dark complected, curly-headed—

Eliza. I am expecting an offer every day.

Jessie. Truly?

Tibbie. He's a perfect brunette!

Eliza. This letter contains the pictured image, and I have no doubt the proffered hand of him whom I hold dearest on earth [*opens letter*], to whom my soul is already knit in closest ties. [*Takes out a photograph in paper covers.*] The very first words are, "Rainbow-hued sweetheart, hope's goddess of my soul,"—oh, he does write so beautifully!—"wilt thou be mine?"—There, girls, a *bona fide* offer!—"wilt wear the queenly title of wife,"—O girls, think of it! *wife*!—"and reign in the home, as thou hast long reigned in the bosom, Of him whose name when written here Will prove thou art to him most dear."

Tibbie. Poetry!

Eliza. He often ascends to poetic heights; and, girls, if you will believe it, I have written a poetical response to this offer.

Bell and Jessie. A response?

Eliza. You know I knew it was coming; that it must inevitably arrive in the near future. I have been at work on my poem for months. [*Goes to table and hands written paper to Bell.*] There I "pour out my full heart in one fervent Yes." I had such hard work with rhyming "Yes." The only word I could find was *guess*.

Bell. Well, do let us see your hero, Eliza. I am just dying to get a look at that photograph.

Tibbie and Jessie. So am I.

Eliza. I had really forgotten it in the delight of receiving his proposal. [*Walks to front of stage while speaking. Looks at face, screams, throws photograph to girls, and runs from the room.*]

Jessie. Well, I never!

Bell. What can be the matter?

Tibbie [*picking up photograph*]. Lor, it's our black Sam!

Bell. Black Sam! the gardener! [*Falls into chair, laughing.*]

Jessie. Somebody has done that for fun! It's too bad!

Tibbie [*holding photograph up to audience*]. A nigger! Did you ever!

Curtain.

GAFFER GREY'S LEGACY

A Comedy in Two Acts

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS



GAFFER GREY'S LEGACY.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. SMITH,	}	<i>Expectant Legacies.</i>
MRS. JOHN BROWN,		
MISS JEMIMA JONES,		
MRS. COL. GREEN,		
LYDIA ROBINSON,		
MISS WINIFRED WHITE,		
MARY GREY,		
BIDDY BOBBINS, <i>a maid of all work.</i>		

COSTUMES.

Modern. In the First Act, all mourning dresses. In the Second, gay gowns as strongly contrasting as possible.

GAFFER GREY'S LEGACY.

SCENE. — *An apartment at MRS. COLONEL GREEN'S villa. Furniture rather shabby, and great attempts at finery, in the form of paper flowers, etc., statuettes in plaster, tables, chairs.*

(*Enter MRS. COLONEL GREEN, and MRS. SMITH, R.*)

MRS. GREEN. Yes, exactly as I tell you, Mrs. Smith, cousin Grey, Gaffer Grey, as he called himself, is actually dead and buried.

MRS. SMITH. Dead and buried! Well, that is some consolation.

MRS. G. Consolation? I trust, Araminta Smith, that you are not in earnest when you say that it is a great consolation to know that dear cousin Grey is dead and buried.

MRS. S. Well, Clementina Green, considering that you used to rail at him for presuming to live so long, and say that he was in his second childhood, I am sure that you have no business to take me to task for what I said. How often have I heard you wish that Gaffer Grey were in his coffin?

MRS. G. Araminta! I do not wish to be compelled to say that I hate you; but mean remarks like that entitle me to say that I despise you! And, madam, if you were not the relative of my dear departed husband — (*Pulls out her handkerchief, and conceals her face in it.*)

MRS. S. Which of them do you allude to? You have buried four "dear departed's;" and I was related to all of them. The first two were my cousins, the third, my brother-in-law, and the fourth, my uncle. It sometimes puzzles me, whether I am to call you cousin, sister, or to address you by the venerable name of Aunt Green.

MRS. G. Mrs. Smith, I hold such inuendoes as those in utter contempt. It is quite beneath my dignity to quarrel with you, the widow of the attorney of a trumpery little county-town.

MRS. S. The trumpery little county town is much obliged to you. What a pity that you should honor it by residing here, and spending your snug little annuity, and your widow's half-pay pension among us; and condescend to live rent free in the cottage which your third husband, the ironmonger, left you for life.

MRS. G. (*fiercely*). Madam! remember, this is my house, and I can order you out of it, if I choose.

MRS. S. And as *I* should not choose to go, you would find it a difficult matter to turn me out. I have a right to be here.

MRS. G. A right, indeed! Come, I like that!

MRS. S. Do you, I am glad to hear it! So here I mean to stay; (*sits R. of table*) and, with the other legatees, shall hear Uncle Grey's will read. Remember, if you please, Araminta, that you are only connected by marriage with the family, whilst we others are really his blood relations, cousins, with the exception of Mary Grey, and Lydia Robinson, his two grandchildren.

MRS. G. Grandchildren whom he, dear old man, disowned.

MRS. S. That is neither here nor there; disown them as he might, he could not prevent them being his own flesh and blood. You have insisted on our all meeting here, and I have come to see fair play; though why Uncle Grey's will should not have been read at my house, by my late husband's partner, Job Six-an-eight, in his private office, I am at a loss to determine.

MRS. G. If you must know, Araminta, it was at my request; I consider myself the head of the family.

MRS. S. What a pity the head should not be blessed with more brains! Now don't get into a bad temper, and discompose yourself, Clementina. (*A knock, R.*) Ah, here come your expected visitors, so I would advise you to look amiable.

MRS. G. I believe, Araminta Smith, I do not require to be tutored by you.

(*Enter BIDDY BOBBINS, L.; she is dressed like a charity girl.*)

BIDDY (*dropping a curtsey in rustic style*). Please, mum, they be come.

MRS. G. (*angrily*). Bridget, how often have I told you not to bob about in that absurd manner. Pray, who is come?

BIDDY (*dropping another curtsey*). Please, mum, a whole lot of 'em.

MRS. G. Oh, the ladies, I suppose you mean?

BIDDY (*curtseying as before*). Please, mum, leastways I don't know. What be I to do with 'em, please, mum?

MRS. G. (*impatiently*). Why show them in, to be sure.

(*Exit BIDDY L.*)

MRS. S. Why, that is Biddy Bobbins from the charity school, is it not? Well, if that be your new lady's maid, I wish you joy. She is the prize dunce of the place.

MRS. G. I beg that you will limit your remarks to me, Araminta, and not make ill-natured observations on any of the domestics of my establishment.

MRS. S. I would not call a servant of all work and a gawky charity girl an establishment.

MRS. G. Perhaps you will be quiet, Araminta, and not quarrel with me when all the world is coming here.

(Enter BIDDY, L.)

BIDDY (*bobbing a curtsey*). Here's the whole lot a-coming up, mum.

MRS. G. The whole lot! Say the ladies, Biddy, and announce them.

BIDDY. Please, mum, I don't know what "'nounce 'em" is.

MRS. S. (*laughing*). Biddy, you are to say their names out loud.

BIDDY. Yes, mum. (*Goes to L; calls out.*) You're to come in. (*Then exclaims loudly.*) Mrs. John Brown, Miss Jemima Jones, Miss Winifred White, Miss Lydia Robinson, and Miss Mary Grey, please, mum. And I told 'em to rub their feet on the door mat, or else you'd scold famously.

(Enter MRS. BROWN, MISS JONES, MISS WINIFRED WHITE, MARY, and LYDIA, L.)

BIDDY. Please, mum, are there any more to come?

MRS. G. No, leave the room, Bridget! and go.

BIDDY (*dropping a curtsey*). Yes, mum, I am a-going — and I wasn't a-going to take the room along with me.

(*Bobs a curtsey, and exit L.*)

MRS. G. Really, my dear friends, you must not feel offended at the awkwardness of my little maid. Dear Mrs. Brown, how well you are looking.

MRS. S. Do you say that Cousin Brown looks well? Poor dear, she is as yellow as a guinea.

MRS. B. And well I may look ill; to think of all the worry and fuss I have had to suffer, and that provoking husband of mine taking everything as quietly as though we had ten thousand a year, and not six children to provide for. Now I'll be bound that because he would not pay a little court to cousin Grey, it will be a dead loss to us of some hundreds and more.

MRS. S. But why, cousin Brown? I believe that we are all quite as nearly related to Gaffer Grey as you are? With the exception, of course, of his two grandchildren.

MRS. B. You forget, cousin Smith, that he disowned them, whereas I was the favorite. Oh, poor dear cousin Grey! he was grateful for all I did for him.

JEMIMA. If you allude to your officiousness, cousin Carolina Brown — and the nasty home-made dishes you set before him at your pretended grand dinners, I don't see that dear Gaffer Grey had much to be grateful for. I am of the opinion that his executors ought to bring you in a bill for patent medicines; for cousin Grey must have spent a fortune in Cockle's Antibilious Pills.

MRS. B. Jemima Jones! I am simply disgusted with you. Ah,

poor dear Gaffer Grey had a happy escape—you know to what I allude.

JEMIMA. Madam, if you mean to insinuate that I ever set my cap at Mr. Grey, you are —

MRS. S. Now don't quarrel, cousins; especially before those two poor children, who, I hope, have been provided for.

WINIFRED. I beg, Mrs. Smith, you will not look at me in that insulting way. If I did live with cousin Grey when his daughter died, I did not prevent him from going to see her, or keep her letters back from him.

MRS. S. Oh! so your conscience does prick you, Jemima; I am glad of that.

LYDIA. Oh, cousins, don't quarrel about poor, dear old grandfather. Perhaps if he had lived, and we had gone now and then to see him —

WINIFRED. But he desired often and often that you two were never to be admitted.

MARY. I know that he did so, but had he known how often I went to his house to get tidings of him, and watched him at a distance when he was sitting in his old arm-chair out in the garden on a fine sunny day, I think he would have liked to see me and to speak to me.

MRS. S. To be sure he would, Mary; and cousin Winifred, had I been in your place, I would have *forced* Gaffer Grey to see his grandchildren. He would have died all the happier for it.

MRS. G. He may have left them a legacy of some kind. Do you know anything relating to his will, Winifred White — eh? (*With meaning.*)

WINIFRED. I don't know what you can be driving at, cousin Clementina. No, I am happy to say that *I* know nothing about Gaffer Grey's will.

MRS. G. Oh, indeed! Perhaps *others* do.

MRS. B. Mrs. Green, I desire you will not look at *me* in that very pointed manner. I can answer for myself; as to Jemima Jones —

JEMIMA. Well, madam, and what of Jemima Jones? If I do happen to know anything about Gaffer Grey's last will, I am not going to gratify idle curiosity.

MRS. S. Because, cousin Jemima, you could not gratify idle curiosity, even if you were so disposed, for you know no more of cousin Grey's will than I do.

MRS. G. What can *you*, Mrs. Smith, know about it?

MRS. S. This much; that cousin Grey, being of sound mind and body, as well we know, went up to London and had his will drawn up then and there, by the best lawyer he could find, and to-day we shall know something about it.

MRS. G. Yes, at one precisely, I expect either the lawyer himself, or his clerk. (*Knock at door.*) That must be the lawyer. Bidly, Bidly, show the gentleman in. (*Goes to L.*)

(Enter BIDDY, L., with note.)

BIDDY. Please, mum, Mr. Crusty, the baker's young man, has left this. *(Holds out letter in her apron.)*

MRS. G. *(snatching it)*. How often, Bridget, have I ordered you always to bring things in either on a salver or a waiter; now mind the next time that you do so.

BIDDY *(bobs a curtsey)*. Yes, mum. *(Exit R.)*

MRS. G. This is only Mr. Crusty's bill, I dare say.

JEMIMA *(aside)*. Crusty, the baker's bill! Well, I dare say other people can afford to run up bills as well. *(Another knock, R.)* That must be the will.

MRS. G. We shall see. Dear me! how long that girl is before she answers the door!

MRS. B. Don't be impatient, cousin Clementina; you cannot expect perfection out of a charity-school at nothing a-year.

MRS. G. Mrs. Brown, your observation is coarse in the extreme.

(Enter BIDDY, L., she kicks the door open, and then walks in with a large tea-tray on which is a large letter.)

BIDDY. Please, mum, here's a chap as has left this here for you. *(All laugh.)*

MRS. G. *(takes letter)*. Mercy on us; what have you brought my best papier-maché tea-tray in here for?

BIDDY. Please, mum, you told me to bring the things in on a waiter, or a summut of the sort; and so I thought that as you had company, mum, I would bring in the smartest tray that I could lay my hands on.

MRS. S. *(laughing)*. I congratulate you, Clementina, on this addition to your establishment.

MRS. G. Vastly polite of you to say so. Bridget, another time you will always bring in a letter on a smaller tray; and never let me hear you saying that a "chap" has called here. What was this person like? I mean the person who left the letter?

BIDDY. Please, mum, he was as like a stick of black sealing wax, as like as could be.

MRS. S. Then it was the lawyer's clerk, of course; this encloses a letter relating to the will. As we are all here, suppose you read it to us, Clementina.

MRS. G. Certainly, with much pleasure. It is addressed, I see, to all the legatees; and as we are all legatees —

MRS. B. Or hope to be so, proceed at once to read it.

MRS. G. I will. Bridget, you may go.

BIDDY. May I? Oh! *(Makes a curtsey, and exit L.)*

MRS. G. Pray, ladies, be seated. *(They all sit, except LYDIA, and MARY.)* As to you children —

MRS. S. (*interrupting her*). Stay here, and sit down with us, happen what may ; you are both cousin Grey's grandchildren.

(MARY and LYDIA sit on two small chairs L. ; the other five form a semicircle, MRS. GREEN in the centre.)

MRS. G. (*clearing her voice, reads*). Previous to the opening of my will, and the promulgation of its contents, I wish the enclosed paper to be read aloud by my late cousin's widow, Mrs. Colonel Green, to the following ladies, viz., my cousins, Araminta Smith, Jemima Jones, Winifred White, Carolina Brown, and also, though I have not exactly named them in this letter, I wish my grandchildren, Lydia Robinson and Mary Grey, to be present ; I recommend these two young persons to the generous kindness of my legatees.

MRS. S. I am glad he has mentioned you, children. That is some consolation. Well, what next ?

MRS. G. (*reads*). I have left the following legacies and little mementoes to be selected from among my goods and chattels, viz., my large silver tankard, my gold snuff-box, a dinner service of the best Worcestershire china, a silver teapot, sugar basin and cream jug, a dozen silver dessert spoons and forks, my likeness in oil, my old family Bible, and my late wife's celebrated book of recipes for making jams, etc. Each lady will draw a number, the highest numbers will entitle the holders to priority of choice. Well, that is odd — so like cousin Grey. I wonder what whim this is of his ?

MRS. B. The legacy does not seem much, but I make no doubt that in his will, we are all handsomely remembered.

MRS. S. And I need not remind you, cousins, that to our generosity he has bequeathed the interests of his orphan granddaughters.

MRS. G. I for one shall not forget them, Araminta. And should the silver spoons and forks fall to *my* lot, I promise to give them up to the two girls. Come, who will arrange the numbers and the names ?

MRS. B. Some one who is perfectly disinterested, I should say.

MRS. S. Then we cannot do better than choose Lydia and Mary ; the one shall write the numbers, and the other the names.

WINIFRED. Agreed, so let us set about it at once.

LYDIA. Here is a sheet of paper, I will tear off five slips, number them, roll them up, and place them in this card-basket.

MARY. I shall do the same for the five names, and pop them into this china vase. (*They prepare the paper, etc.*)

JEMIMA. It is understood, I suppose, that whoever draws number one, has the first choice.

MRS. B. Of course, we all choose something, by way of a memento of dear old Gaffer Grey.

MRS. G. And whatever of the articles he has named should not

be chosen, we shall have much pleasure in dividing between Mary and Lydia; that will be carrying out dear old cousin Grey's intentions.

MRS. S. Particularly if you will all kindly leave them the most valuable articles.

MRS. B. I should think that what is useful would be most appropriate.

MRS. S. Certainly, plate and china, for instance; I am delighted to find that you are all so kindly disposed. Now, are we all ready.

OMNES. Quite ready.

MRS. S. Then I vote that the drawing should begin; here, Lydia and Mary, hand round the tickets. (*They hand them round, each lady takes a number, and a name.*) Now, ready, present, read!

MRS. G. I have drawn number one, and the name of Jemima Jones.

JEMIMA. Then I am to have the first choice; I shall select the silver tea service.

MRS. G. Oh, how provoking! Cousin Jemima, I ought by rights to have that.

JEMIMA. Why, pray, should you have it in preference to any one else?

MRS. G. Because cousin Grey all but promised to leave it to me in his will.

JEMIMA. You know what they say of promises and pie-crusts.

MRS. B. How very irreverent to allude to cousin Grey's promises and pie-crusts at the same time: one can easily see, Jemima, that your grandfather was only a pastry-cook and confectioner.

JEMIMA. And I, cousin Carolina, know some people who couldn't tell you *who* their grandfathers were. Well, it is my turn now. (*Reads from paper she has drawn.*) Number four, Mrs. Brown — I wish you joy, cousin.

MRS. B. Don't be a hypocrite, Jemima. Now I am to read. (*Reads from papers.*) Mrs. Green, number three.

MRS. G. Well, I shall have the third choice, that's something.

WINIFRED. So it is, there are still three prizes in the wheel; am I to read next? (*Opens and reads.*) Number two, and Winifred White; I thought I should be lucky.

MRS. S. Then mine must be number five, and my own name. I am quite content, and my choice is soon made; I choose old Gaffer Grey's likeness in oil. To be sure it has about as much resemblance to the dear old soul as a tom-cat has to a bird of paradise; but Gaffer Grey was a good friend to me, and I'll hang it up in my best parlor.

MRS. B. So I would; well what do you choose, Miss Winifred White? Not the gold snuff-box, I should hope.

WINIFRED. Should you? Then I fear that you will be disappointed, for the gold snuff-box is the thing of all others I covet.

MRS. B. That box would just have suited my husband ; it is worth twenty guineas any day, and you don't take snuff, Winifred.

WINIFRED. No, but my husband may.

MRS. B. Pray add, when you get one ! He must be a bold man who would marry you.

MRS. G. Hush, hush, cousin Carolina, now don't quarrel about trifles.

MRS. B. Do you call it a trifle to lose a gold snuff-box ?

MRS. G. But then you can console yourself with —

MRS. B. The silver tankard ? Well, I suppose I must put up with that ; small fish is better than no fish at all.

MRS. G. I hope you have not set your heart on it, for I intend to have that ; but there is still the handsome dinner service.

MRS. B. A dinner service indeed ; when I wanted a tankard.

MRS. S. Come, come, Carolina ; the china is very handsome, and I hope you will invite us all to dine with you the first time you use it.

LYDIA. And pray, cousins, what are *we* to have ?

MRS. G. As you, Lydia, think of being married soon, I would advise you to choose the book of choice recipes.

MARY. Then I may have grandfather's Bible ; the Bible in which my father learnt to read.

MRS. S. And the dozen of spoons and forks must be divided amongst you two. Now, ladies, what else do you intend doing for these children.

MRS. G. Doing ? Nothing ! I consider that they are both very handsomely remembered.

MRS. B. We have been most generous to them !

JEMIMA. Too generous in fact.

WINIFRED. A very great deal too generous.

MRS. S. Then I must follow your example. I will not exchange, nor give up the picture, but Lydia and Mary must accept of five pounds a-piece in lieu of it. I know they would both of them have chosen their grandfather's likeness, had the choice been given them. What is next to be done, Clementina ?

MRS. G. Here is another paper, containing further instructions, I dare say relative to the will. (*Reads.*) After my cousins have made their selection, they will each communicate with the solicitor who drew up my will, and then in return he will inform them when and where my last will and testament is to be read, and learn the name of those whom I have appointed my executors. The bearer of this letter will call for the answers from the several ladies, and deliver up to each — on a stated day — the legacy each has chosen.

ALL. Dear cousin Grey !

MRS. S. Time enough to say " Dear cousin Grey," by-and-by. To work now and have your answers ready. Mary and Lydia, come home with me.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE. — *The same as in Act I.*

(*Enter MRS. GREEN, R., drawing on a pair of white gloves.*)

MRS. G. At last the eventful day is come: what a curious affair this has been from beginning to end! But to-day I hope that all suspense will be happily terminated. (*A knock, L.; then enter MRS. BROWN, MISS JONES, MISS WHITE.*) Ah, good-morning.

MRS. B. You might say good-afternoon, for it is long past two. Where are cousin Araminta and the two girls?

MRS. G. Well, with respect to Araminta Smith, I can't exactly make her out. In fact (but let it go no further) do you know that I have my misgivings.

WINIFRED. Oh, my gracious! and so have I.

JEMIMA. Goodness me! and I have all along suspected there was something suspicious in Araminta's conduct. Do you remember how very sadly she behaved respecting the legacies?

MRS. B. It was from some sinister motive, that she wanted us to give up the plates and china to those two girls.

WINIFRED. And would have persuaded us to choose in preference the picture and the two books.

MRS. G. Now you mention that circumstance, it did strike me.

MRS. B. And so it did me. In short, my dears, it quite knocked me over. Pray, what are we to do now we are here?

MRS. G. Why, as it pleased Gaffer Grey to will that his will should not be made known till a twelve-month after his decease, when we were to leave off our mourning, and assemble here for the purpose of learning his intentions respecting the bulk of his property, consisting of money and houses.

WINIFRED. But where then is this will, and above all, our legacies?

MRS. G. Strange to say, that will is still in the hands of the lawyers, and our legacies will this day be delivered up to us, carefully sealed up, each parcel as carefully marked with the number the owner had drawn. (*Knock at door L.; then enter BIDDY, smartly dressed.*) Who is it, Biddy?

BIDDY (*musingly*). Well, mum, it's the same indiiddle.

MRS. G. Individual, Biddy, not indiiddle.

BIDDY. Yes, mum, as came here promiscuously like, a time ago. He gave this note, mum, and left a parcel which I put into your room, mum. (*Gives note, and exit L.*)

MRS. G. What can this be? (*Reads.*) "The ladies will find their legacies at their respective dwellings; and in one of them Gaffer Grey's will is placed, to be read aloud at Mrs. Green's residence by the finder." There!

MRS. B. I shall run home. Who knows but it may be in the china tea-pot. I fly to see. (*Exit L.*)

WINIFRED. It may be packed up with the gold snuff-box. I am all impatience to know. (*Exit L.*)

JEMIMA. I have a very strong suspicion that it is snugly concealed in the silver coffee-pot. I am all over pins and needles at the thought. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. G. By the pointed declaration that the will is to be read here, I am convinced that it is placed in the old family tankard, which was such a favorite of dear Gaffer Grey. Oh, what a triumph it will be to witness the disappointment of those harpies. (*Exit L., after a pause.*)

(*Enter BIDDY, L., showing in MRS. SMITH, LYDIA, and MARY.*)

BIDDY. Please, mum, and young ladies, missus will be here directly, she bid me say.

MRS. S. Beg of her not to hurry herself; we can wait.

BIDDY. Just as you please, mum. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. S. So at last, my dear children, we are to know the result of Gaffer Grey's will; and also what benefits each will derive from his legacy to her.

MARY. If grandfather has left me nothing but a kind message, I shall feel satisfied. I am young and not totally unprovided for. Lydia and I can still live comfortably together.

LYDIA. That we can; it is no hardship to us to work. Our little school is increasing; and the sale of Mary's drawings and my embroidery enables us to put by a little money every year, so I have not much anxiety about grandfather's will.

MRS. S. I am glad to hear you talk so calmly about it, for after all, my dear girls, you have the best right to his money, and I shall be very much surprised if he has not left you each something, and shall be still more astonished if he has left me anything. One great consolation will be that I can very well dispense with his bounty. (*Re-enter MRS. GREEN, L.*) Ah, cousin Clementina, how do you do. Well, what is going to happen relative to cousin Grey's will?

MRS. G. It is to be read here, to-day, by his particular desire.

MRS. S. Indeed! but where is this all-important document?

MRS. G. According to this note (*gives note to MRS. SMITH*) the will is packed up with one of the legacies; *which*, we have yet to learn.

MRS. S. (*after reading note*). Then, Araminta, I will just run home, and examine my old picture, and I will bring your two parcels, girls, with me. (*Exit L.*)

MARY. There is scarcely any occasion for that, cousin, it is sure not to be there.

LYDIA. Quite certain! Just imagine grandfather Grey, the most cautious man in the world, trusting his will to the keeping of two giddy girls.

MRS. G. That is a very sensible remark of yours, and if I find that you two young women behave as you ought, I shall patronize you.

LYDIA. Thanks, madam, but we shall scarcely need it whilst we are able to work and maintain ourselves; if you will find us purchasers for our little drawings and embroidery, that will really serve us.

MRS. G. And that I shall readily promise. (*Aside.*) They know nothing about the will, that is certain. (*Loud knock at door L.*) They are coming back, now we shall hear.

(*Enter BIDDY, L.*)

BIDDY. Please, mum, it's that Mrs. Brown, in a rage and in a hurry.

(*Enter MRS. BROWN, hastily L., she pushes BIDDY on one side.*)

BIDDY. Well, I'm sure, if *you* call that manners, *I* don't.

MRS. B. Don't presume to talk to me, girl! (*Exit BIDDY, in a huff, banging the door after her.*) If I were you, Mrs. Green, I wouldn't be such a hypocrite, for all the world!

MRS. G. Hypocrite, madam! I scorn your words, I don't know what you mean.

MRS. B. My meaning is plain enough; yes, you knew that cousin Grey's will was concealed in that old silver tankard, and that is the reason you chose it; a tankard that by rights ought to have been given up to Mary Grey, there.

MRS. G. Then, why did you not give up the china service, madam, to Lydia Robinson, who had a better right to it than you, if it comes to that. (*Knock L.*)

(*Enter BIDDY, L.*)

Well, Bridget, who is it?

BIDDY. It's them two others, mum, and a precious ill-temper they are both in; they are ready to claw each other's eyes out.

(*Enter MISS JONES and MISS WHITE, angrily, L.; exit BIDDY L., laughing.*)

JEMIMA. So, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Brown, I hope you are satisfied with your duplicity and meanness.

WINIFRED. Yes, with your meanness and duplicity, ma'am, sending us out of the way that you might read the will without us; but I'll go to law, that's what I'll do, see if I don't; yes, yes, we know your motive in choosing as you did.

MRS. B. What motive, pray, Miss Winifred White?

WINIFRED. Don't look at me in that manner, madam, because, madam, I'll not put up with it, madam!

MRS. B. Oh, indeed, miss, then, miss, I have heard that a cat may look at a king, miss; I am sure then that I may look at a meaner thing.

WINIFRED. Pray whom do you call a mean thing? I call it *very* mean, to have chosen the two legacies you did; they ought to have been given up to Mary and Lydia; you might have been content with the books, instead.

MRS. G. So, you are both dissatisfied with the gold snuff-box, and the silver tea service, both of which should have been given up to Mary, and Lydia: why did you not choose the cookery book?

MRS. B. Or the family Bible?

MRS. G. Or the old picture of Gaffer Grey?

JEMIMA. Which cousin Smith chose, and much good may it do her. Ah, you two knew what you were about, I'll be bound! I declare that cousin Smith, with all her bluntness, is worth a dozen such as you.

WINIFRED. Yes, a dozen such! a whole house full of such!

(They all commence quarrelling together, and speaking at the same time.)

MRS. G. Oh, you scandalous creature! etc.

MRS. B. You deceitful toads! etc.

WINIFRED. You know what I think of you, etc.

JEMIMA. Such trumpery pretenders! etc.

(Enter MRS. SMITH, L., with two small parcels in her hand.)

MRS. S. Heyday, cousins! what is the meaning of this uproar? Do you know I could hear you down at the gate.

JEMIMA. Cousin Araminta, those two deceitful creatures have got the will, and won't read it.

MRS. S. Because, if you remember, the will was to be read in the presence of all the legatees.

MRS. G. I am perfectly aware of that; and so were these ladies. But here have Jemima Jones and Winifred White been abusing Mrs. Brown and myself, because it did not happen to be amongst their legacies.

MRS. S. Well, well, as six of us must be disappointed, it is foolish to quarrel about it. The will is not like Mike Rooney's pigeon: it cannot be in two places at once. See, girls, if it happens to be in either of your books. *(Gives parcels to LYDIA and MARY.)*

MRS. G. The idea of cousin Grey's will being there!—absurd.

MRS. S. Let them have the pleasure of breaking the seals, and looking if it be there.

MRS. B. That is the lawyer's seal. *(GIRLS open parcels.)* So we are sure there is no foul play there.

MRS. G. Certainly not.

WINIFRED. Nobody would think it worth their while to cheat them, I imagine.

JEMIMA. No ; it was only us who were to be insulted in that manner, it appears.

MRS. G. Well, girls, have you either of you found it ?

LYDIA. There is no paper here, but this, a small one. (*Reads paper.*) Why, I declare, cousin Smith, if it is not a cheque for one hundred pounds.

MARY. Mine is the same.

OMNES. One hundred pounds !

MRS. S. One hundred to each of his grandchildren ; I congratulate you both.

MRS. G. Well, I should think that Mr. Grey might have thought of other people in the same way.

MRS. S. He may in his will, Jemima. Do you happen to have it ?

JEMIMA. Cousin Araminta, I have not.

WINIFRED. Nor I. It appears that we have been left out.

MRS. S. How so, you all had your choice. Mrs. Brown, what say you ?

MRS. B. I should soon have let you know ; I am no hypocrite (*looks at MRS. GREEN*), and don't find wills in silver tankards, after knowing they were placed there.

MRS. S. You allude to cousin Clementina, I presume ? Well, Mrs. Green, produce this much-talked-of will.

MRS. G. You know well enough, cousin Araminta, that I have not got the will in my possession.

MRS. S. Then if you have not got the will, Mrs. Green, I should like to know who has — for most decidedly I have not.

OMNES. You have not Gaffer Grey's will ?

MRS. S. No ; I have nothing of the sort, for when I opened my legacy, what do you think I found ?

ALL. What ?

MRS. S. Only a new likeness of cousin Grey, taken in London just before his death, and stuck in the frame was this. (*Hands an unsealed paper to MRS. GREEN.*) Read it, cousin Clementina — it is meant for all of us.

MRS. G. If you insist upon it. I see it is in cousin Grey's writing, and also signed and witnessed ; of course it has all the validity of a will.

MRS. B. Whatever its contents may be ?

MRS. G. Most certainly.

WINIFRED. And, of course, no one would attempt to dispute the will.

MRS. G. Dispute the will ! They must be mad to do so ; because if we proved that Gaffer Grey's will was invalid, then all his property would go to his next heirs, and they would be Mary and Lydia, and we should not be a bit the better off.

MRS. S. So I think we may agree to abide by the contents of

that paper, or will, or whatever it is; now, Clementina, pray begin.

MRS. G. (*reads*). "First, I bequeath to each of the undermentioned ladies, the sum of fifty pounds: viz. to Clementina Green, Jemima Jones, Winifred White, and Carolina Brown. To my cousin Araminta Smith (who has constantly contradicted me and thwarted me), I leave nothing, as she has shown such an independent spirit on every occasion. The said Araminta Smith may take charge of my two grandchildren, if she is so minded. To them I leave the residue of my property; and to the lady who selects my old picture, be she who she may, I bequeath the sum of five hundred pounds." Impossible!

MRS. B. What! five hundred pounds to Araminta Smith? She knew it all along! Don't tell me; she knew that those two girls were to have cousin Grey's money!

MRS. S. And who pray had a better right to Gaffer Grey's money? As to my legacy, how comes it that none of you thought of choosing that dear old man's likeness. No; you have been sneering and jeering at me ever since. Now how could I guess that such a paper would have been stuck in a picture frame?

WINIFRED. It looks very suspicious, I must say. Oh, what have I gained? Fifty pounds, and an old-fashioned gold snuff-box.

MRS. G. Recollect that you had the first choice; besides who knows, Winifred White, you may marry yet, and present the snuff-box to your husband?

WINIFRED. I understand your sneers, madam! But if I do marry, no one shall say that I have survived the loss of my fourth husband, and am on the lookout for a fifth!

MRS. S. Come, come, my good friends, what occasion is there for us to quarrel? We are none of us in want of money. You, Mrs. Brown, have the best of husbands, with a competent income.

MRS. B. All very well; but Gaffer Grey might have made the fifty a hundred. What can those two children want with three hundred a year each, pray?

MRS. S. They may marry, and find a use for it.

MARY. And I hope, cousin Brown, that I may be as good a wife as you are.

LYDIA. So do I; and after all, as cousin Smith says, there is no occasion to quarrel. I am sure you are all glad that grandfather forgave us before he died.

MRS. S. To be sure; and as a proof — all these ladies will dine with me to-morrow to celebrate your good fortune. I think if any one has a right to grumble it is myself. Cousin Grey in his will has had the last word; and to lose that we all know is a great hardship!

MRS. G. So like you, cousin Smith; yes, we will all accept your kind invitation; and you are a good-hearted soul, Araminta.

WINIFRED. So she is: and I bear no malice, I shall come, cousin Araminta!

JEMIMA. And so will I, and, Lydia and Mary, I wish you both joy.

MRS. B. Of course, since we are all to be friends, each of us shall make some use of our legacies on the occasion. I shall have the dinner served in the China dinner service.

MRS. G. Mrs. Brown will make the claret cup for us in the family tankard.

JEMIMA. I shall make tea in my silver tea service.

WINIFRED. My snuff-box shall be produced at the dessert.

MRS. S. Good ; and my old Betty shall try her hand at some of the famous recipes in Lydia's book ; whilst I shall instal Cousin Grey's picture in the dining-room ; and we can almost fancy the good old soul is looking down upon us, and smiling approval on the kindly feeling in which each has accepted —

ALL. "GAFFER GREY'S LEGACY."

CURTAIN.

THE GOVERNESS

A Comedy in One Act

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS



THE GOVERNESS.

CHARACTERS

THE GOVERNESS.

FRANCISCA }
LOUISA } *Her Pupils.*

THE GOVERNESS.

SCENE. — *Apartment in an Old Castle. Table with Books, Maps, etc. Chairs. Practicable D. in C. Windows R. and L. FRANCISCA and LOUISA discovered, each looking through a telescope. A chair R. and L. of table, and one in C.*

FRANCISCA. Louise, do you see anything?

LOUISA. No. Not a soul!

FRAN. Nor I. The very dust lies still.

LOU. Was there ever anything so provoking? I shall go mad.

FRAN. I cannot imagine what can be the cause of the delay; for I have no doubt our fate has been decided long ago.

LOU. Oh! to be sure it has! And the distance is so short, the messengers might have been here an hour since.

FRAN. It really is very strange. This delay makes me dread to hear the result of their consultation.

LOU. I will take another peep. (*Raising glass.*)

FRAN. And yet I do not know why I should dread it. Our kind-hearted guardian has always been good to us; nor can he find any solid cause of objection to either of our lovers.

LOU. Very true. We shall soon see them galloping here to claim our hands, and free us from the daily torment of our formal governess.

FRAN. Yes, and if they would but come before she has sipped her coffee, which she loves too well to be disturbed from. But see, look again, surely that is some one coming. (*Both gazing eagerly through the glasses.*)

LOU. I see no one. How very provoking! What will become of us, if she should be here before the letters arrive?

FRAN. She is a good old soul, but such a ridiculous prude that she would go wild at the thoughts of our marriage. And, if the letters were to fall into her hands!

LOU. Don't mention such a possibility. I tremble at the thought; and now, lest she should wonder at our silence and quiet, I will take my guitar, that she may fancy we are preparing for our music lesson, while you, Francisca, watch steadily at the window.

(*Song for LOUISA introduced, if desired. FRANCISCA meanwhile watches from window, sometimes using telescope. At close LOUISA goes to the window where FRANCISCA stands.*)

LOU. Well, do you see any one ?

FRAN. (*speaking hurriedly*). Yes. Look yonder !

LOU. Where ? (*After a pause, and looking out eagerly.*) Surely you don't mean that cart of hay ?

FRAN. (*turning away disconsolately*). So it is a cart of hay. My wishes deceived me. Here, take the glass. (*Giving it to LOUISA.*) I have watched till I am quite confused. I will sing now, while you look out. (*FRANCISCA sings, if desired.*)

(*At close LOUISA starts from the window, puts the glass on the table.*)

LOU. Hark ! Oh, heavens — the door opens — she's coming —

FRAN. Quick ! quick, — let us be seated.

(*They rush to the table. LOUISA sits on chair in C ; FRANCISCA on chair R.*)

LOU. Oh, the abominable grooms.

FRAN. (*starts up, rushes to the window, and looks out*). Still no one coming.

LOU. Most unfortunate. (*Sighs.*)

FRAN. (*hurries back to her seat*). Hush, she's coming.

(*Enter GOVERNESS by side door in L., in an old-fashioned flowered silk dress, long waist, sleeves cut short to shape of elbow, with ruffles hanging from them. Skirt open in front, showing a fine light-green quilted satin petticoat, muslin kerchief pinned carefully over her bosom, long black silk mittens ; her hair dressed high with fly cap ; very stiff and formal in her manner.*)

Gov. Ay, ay, young ladies ! Already so industrious ? Wisely done, indeed, — quite a miracle to see you thus, and so early, too. (*Sets herself, speaking to FRANCISCA.*) Pray, young lady, what are you reading, may I ask ?

FRAN. (*hesitating*). It is —

Gov. (*drawing herself up*). No romance, I hope.

FRAN. (*looking very solemn*). Oh ! dear, no.

Gov. Come, then, my dear girls ; we will recreate ourselves with a lesson on geography.

FRAN. (*sighs*). Heigho !

Gov. (*looking at her, astonished*). You sigh. How is this ?

FRAN. (*passionately*). To say the truth, I am sick of lessons. Are we forever to be treated like children ?

LOU. Yes. It is really too bad, to be cooped up like birds in a cage, and at our age, too, when we might be cutting a figure in the world.

FRAN. And really, to say the truth, we are not so ugly, either.

LOU. No, indeed. I think we are tolerably presentable. (*Drawing herself up with self-satisfaction.*)

GOV. (*who, as each has spoken, has looked from one to the other with signs of astonishment*). What do I hear? Can it be possible? Are these my pupils? This is your new-fangled freedom, I suppose. Reform Bills, etc. Absolute Radicalism. (*Rises and comes forward, clasping her hands and raising her eyes.*) Ah! St. Anne, — beloved governess of my youth, — what would you have said had I dared to have spoken thus to you? You were severe, perhaps too severe, but — (*remains standing, her hands clasped, her head bent down, as in thought.* LOUISA and FRANCISCA advance to the front of stage R.).

LOU. (*aside to FRANCISCA*). We have done unwisely to irritate her.

FRAN. We have. Let us try conciliation.

LOU. 'Twere best. (*Aloud to GOVERNESS, coaxingly.*) Is it long since you have seen your good St. Anne?

GOV. (*rousing slowly from her attitude of thought*). Full thirty years.

FRAN. (*aside to LOUISA*). She has already forgotten her anger.

LOU. (*to GOVERNESS*). Does she live far off?

GOV. About five miles.

FRAN. I wonder you have not seen her all this time.

GOV. And so do I. I must make an effort to go to her; but my love for you has always detained me at home.

LOU. You are too good.

FRAN. You are always so kind.

GOV. (*in high good-humor*). Come, my darlings, we will read. (*Returns to seat herself in chair C., puts on her spectacles, takes up a book, and turns over the leaves.* FRANCISCA and LOUISA seat themselves sadly in chair R. and L.)

LOU. Everything dances so before my eyes, — I fear I am not well enough to read to-day.

FRAN. And I have had no sleep all night. I feel irritable, fidgetty, and ill. Do not ask me to read to-day; indeed, I am not well.

GOV. Poor children. You have caught cold by too late strolling in the garden last evening. I told you it would be so.

LOU. I feel quite faint. I will go to the window, if you please. (*Rises and goes to window L.*)

GOV. Do so —

FRAN. And I will do the same. (*Goes to window R.*)

GOV. Poor things, they are delicate children.

LOU. (*screamingly*). There they are!

FRAN. (*the same*). There they are, sure enough!

LOU. How they gallop!

FRAN. They dart like arrows from a bow!

GOV. (*who has turned on her seat, first to one, then to the other,*

as they spoke). They gallop! They dart! What are you talking of? Are the poor children gone mad? Tell me, I say, who or what are you talking of?

FRAN. (*without looking at her*). The groom.

LOU. (*the same*). The groom.

GOV. The groom! The groom! What groom?

FRAN. and LOU. (*both together*). The messengers.

GOV. (*stands up, and stamping impatiently*). What messengers?

FRAN. Here they are at the door! (*Rushes forward.*)

LOU. Let us fly. (*Rushes forward also.*)

GOV. (*catching them both by the wrist*). Stop, young ladies. I desire to know what all this means. Whither so fast, I pray?

(LOUISA and FRANCISCA both struggling to get loose.)

LOU. Oh! do not stop us; we must fetch our letters. (GOVERNESS starts.)

FRAN. We must, indeed. It is of the utmost importance.

GOV. Letters! letters! Grooms! grooms! So! Pretty doings! But stay here, young good-for-nothings. I will fetch these letters myself.

LOU. (*hastily and very politely, but still held fast by GOVERNESS*). Oh! we would not give you that trouble for the world.

FRAN. Oh! dear no; we could not think of such a thing. Pray sit down, dear governess. You must not think of tiring yourself.

GOV. Really. You are very polite, but you will not cheat me thus. (*Dashes their hands from her, and holding up her finger in a threatening manner.*) Stir from here, if you dare. (*Exit L. D.*)

(LOUISA and FRANCISCA look at each other in dismay.)

LOU. She's gone!

FRAN. Oh yes, she's gone!

LOU. And we?

FRAN. Remain here.

LOU. Were ever girls in such a cruel predicament?

FRAN. But, let us consider what is to be done.

LOU. (*looking round, runs to the table, and seizes the spectacles, returns to FRANCISCA*). This is lucky. She has left her spectacles. We will hide them, which will prevent her, at any rate, reading the letters at present. (*Conceals the spectacles.*)

FRAN. A lucky thought. We shall at least gain time, as you say; here she comes. (*Re-enter GOVERNESS at the same door through which she went out, with the two letters in her hand, which she holds up with a look of stern reproach, to FRANCISCA and LOUISA.*)

GOV. Unworthy girls! Is it for this I have educated you with so much care? Love letters! and tender messages through a couple of grooms. (*Raises her hands and eyes in horror.*)

LOU. (*putting on an air of astonishment and tenderness*). What has happened, dear governess, to put you in such an agony?

Gov. And you really ask me. Have you no shame in you?

LOU. If you wish it, ma'am, I will be as much ashamed as you please, but I should like to know first what for, — or why, —

Gov. And you have the audacity to pretend innocence and ignorance of the contents of these letters! (*Shaking them at FRANCISCA and LOUISA.*)

FRAN. Oh, dear, no; by no means. We are perfectly aware of who wrote those letters, and should have known still more by this time, if you did not keep them from us. (*Trying to reach them, which the GOVERNESS prevents.*) They are from our guardian, to say I should —

LOU. Yes, from our guardian, to tell us that we should, — (*hesitating, and looking to FRANCISCA for the end of her speech.*)

FRAN. That we should, —

Gov. Silence! good-for-nothing girls. It is vain to attempt any more impositions on me.

LOU. (*coaxingly*). Oh, dear, no! Impose upon you! How could we think of such a thing?

FRAN. (*the same*). You that are so kind to us, so indulgent, — (*very coaxingly*), — I am sure you will give us the letters.

Gov. (*turning away in a rage*). Begone, I say. You shall not have the letters. I go to my own room to read them, and act accordingly. I am inexorable. (*Looking at FRANCISCA and LOUISA indignantly. Exit in a very stately manner through D. in C. FRANCISCA and LOUISA run to the door and find it locked.*)

FRAN. and LOU. (*speaking together*). Mercy, mercy.

(*They return together to the front of the stage, and look at each other in dismay.*)

LOU. Now, what shall we do?

FRAN. Ah! what indeed?

LOU. I fear we have nothing for it but patience.

FRAN. A lucky thought, your hiding the spectacles.

LOU. (*considering*). I have a stratagem in my head, but it is not quite ripe yet.

FRAN. So have I, but it requires courage. (*Shaking her head and meditating.*)

LOU. (*eagerly*). Now I have it!

FRAN. (*despairingly*). I fear mine will not do. (*Considering; springs up with delight.*) Yes, yes; it will do. I have it!

LOU. Come, then, to our rooms for consultation, nor must we lose time. (*Exit FRANCISCA and LOUISA R. 2 E.*)

(*Re-enter GOVERNESS through D. in C.*)

Gov. I have not my spectacles with me, and these love letters are written in so small a hand, I cannot make out a word. (*Look-*

ing for the spectacles among the things on the table.) Where can they be? Of all things, I hate the trouble of seeking for anything. *(Looking around her.)* Where are these girls gone? Giddy creatures; it is in vain to call, I suppose. They are at the bottom of the garden by this time. *(Coming forward.)* Ah! I was once young, and I may say without vanity, tolerably well-looking. *(Draws herself up, returning quickly to table.)* But I shall forget the letters and the spectacles. *(Looks again for them on the table. Turns to the window again. While she is looking out, enter FRANCISCA, R. E. dressed as a young dandy, with an eye-glass.)*

FRAN. *(aside)*. There she is. My brother's wardrobe has done wonders, and not having her spectacles she'll never find me out, for she is blind as a beetle. Hem! *(GOVERNESS starts and turns round.)*

FRAN. *(taking off her hat and bowing low)*. Madam.

GOV. *(surprised and alarmed, curtsying low, and advancing to L.S. front of stage)*. Sir! May I ask what brought you here?

FRAN. *(affectedly)*. Love and duty, madam, brought me here.

GOV. Love!

FRAN. Yes, madam; love and duty. I find that my groom has given you a letter which I trusted to his care, when he should have given it to a young lady, who, I believe, you have some little knowledge of. I demand that letter; it is not for you.

GOV. *(haughtily)*. And pray, sir, who are you, who take the liberty of entering into my presence unannounced?

FRAN. If you particularly wish to know, I will tell you, ma'am. I am Sir Henry Darlington. *(Bowing.)*

GOV. *(pointing to the door)*. Leave the room, sir.

FRAN. When I have the letter, ma'am, I will, with pleasure; but believe me, on my honor, not till then.

GOV. *(indignantly)*. Sir!

FRAN. *(bowing)*. Madam!

GOV. *(aside)*. I must get rid of him before my girls return. *(To him mildly.)* Sir, you are come to the wrong house, be assured.

FRAN. *(calmly)*. I am very well aware what house I am come to.

GOV. *(angry)*. Sir, you intrude here.

FRAN. Probably I do; give me the letter, and I am gone directly.

GOV. A gentleman would not act thus.

FRAN. Possibly not.

GOV. It is a silly, boyish trick — unmanly, impertinent.

FRAN. It is not for me to contradict you.

GOV. *(passionately)*. Go! Leave the room, I command you, sir. *(Pointing to the door.)*

FRAN. *(holding out her hand)*. The letter.

GOV. *(vexed)*. The letter?

FRAN. *(calmly)*. Yes, the letter.

Gov. You are too bold, sir.

FRAN. For the letter I came; the letter I will have; nor will I stir an inch without it.

(Fetches the chair R. of table, and places it in the C. towards the front of stage. Throws herself carelessly in it, having thrown her hat on the table.)

Gov. *(aside)*. What impudence! What shall I do? *(Considering.)* I will try intimidation, — such pert youths are generally cowards. *(To FRANCISCA.)* You had better make what haste you can out of this house, young gentleman; for I expect the brother of my pupils here every moment from the chase, and if he sees you, you are lost.

FRAN. Nevertheless, I shall not stir.

Gov. *(furiously)*. He'll blow your brains out!

FRAN. *(calmly)*. We shall see.

Gov. He'll set the dogs at you.

FRAN. I shall soon master them.

Gov. *(still more angry)*. He'll run you through the body.

FRAN. I should like to see it.

Gov. *(aside)*. Who would have thought the fop so courageous. What's to be done? I cannot frighten him. I must try civility. *(Turning to FRANCISCA, and curtesying.)* Sir, I shall be very much obliged to you if you will leave this house.

FRAN. The letter in my hand, I will readily oblige you.

Gov. *(hesitating)*. But, sir, this letter —

FRAN. No hesitation. The letter I must have.

Gov. *(distractedly aside)*. What shall I do? I must and will know the contents of these letters.

FRAN. *(holding out her hand)*. The letter.

Gov. *(wringing her hands)*. I dare not. What shall I do?

(Enter LOUISA, R. U. E., disguised as an old lady, the same style and make-up of dress as GOVERNESS, but the gown of gray silk, the pelticoat pink satin quilted, supporting herself in walking with a crutch-headed stick. Totters down to the front of the stage L., looking at GOVERNESS and FRANCISCA as she comes along with astonishment.)

Lou. What do I see? A young man here! and with a pupil of mine! An assignation! Are these the fruits of my prudent example, my lessons of modesty and propriety? *(Turning to GOVERNESS in a pretended passion.)* Tell me, dishonorable creature, what does it mean?

FRAN. *(aside)*. Louisa plays like an angel!

Gov. *(agitated)*. I am all consternation! What! Me! I! a dishonorable creature! *(Turning to LOUISA.)* Pray, ma'am, may I be allowed to ask who you are, that take the liberty of commenting on what I do?

LOU. How now! Why, this out-Herods Herod! What! Pretend not to know me. What will the world come to next? (*Goes a little nearer to GOVERNESS.*) You would make me believe you did not know St. Anne!

Gov. (*starting and delighted*). How! You. St. Anne?

LOU. (*drawing herself up*). Yes; St. Anne.

Gov. (*with joy*). Oh! welcome, welcome. How have I longed for this hour. Dear, dear St. Anne. (*Looking closely at her.*) But surely you are much changed?

LOU. Yes. (*Sighs.*) Time has destroyed my charms; indeed, he works great havoc with us all.

Gov. (*sighing*). Too true! But you appear to me taller and thinner.

LOU. Very likely. I am still alert. Would you believe I walked all the way here?

Gov. Indeed! It is very long since we have met.

LOU. Full thirty years. Why, child, you have gray hairs, I see. (*Examining one of her hands.*) And your fingers lean. (*Starting, and seeming to recollect.*) But what did I see on entering? A young man! And tête-à-tête with you! (*Angrily.*) Explain; what does this mean?

Gov. (*pleadingly*). Oh, dear St. Anne, have patience; you wrong me. This youngster has not come to me, but —

FRAN. (*rising*). Excuse me, ma'am, I did come to you for my letter. 'Tis that I want. (*Holding out her hand for it.*)

LOU. (*raising her eyes and hands in horror*). Letter! A letter, and from this lady, sir? Now, farewell reputation, honor, modesty, all that makes the beauty of life. You, my pupil! Go — I disown you forever. (*Turns as if going.*)

Gov. (*seizing the skirt of her gown*). Oh, do but stay! Do but listen! Indeed you are deceived. The letter is neither written by me, nor for me. Indeed, you mistake. (*Much agitated.*)

LOU. Yet I see it in your hands. Give it me; I will judge for myself.

Gov. (*hesitating*). But —

LOU. What! you hesitate? You would deceive me? (*Turns from her in disdain, going more to F. of stage.*)

Gov. (*humbly, giving the letters*). Here, take them; but you will see that you are deceived. (*Retreats back a step or two.*)

FRAN. (*starts forward to LOUISA*). That letter I demand; it is mine.

LOU. (*giving it*). Take it, young gentleman.

(*They both eagerly open and read their letters. Meanwhile GOVERNESS speaks hastily to LOUISA.*)

Gov. But you know not, dear St. Anne, these letters which I have intercepted are for my girls, and —

FRAN. (*flourishing her letter*). Consent! Consent!

LOU. (*the same*). Consent! Consent!

FRAN. (*to LOUISA, spreading open her arms*). Come to my heart!

LOU. (*embracing her, and throwing down her stick*). We shall be happy.

GOV. (*in an agony of surprise*). Young gentleman! St. Anne, in a man's arms! I shall die. The world is at an end.

(*Totters back to the chair from which FRANCISCA had risen, and sinks in it fainting. FRANCISCA and LOUISA, seeing her, are shocked; fling themselves on their knees R. and L. of GOVERNESS, and throwing off their false head-dress, their hair falls down in ringlets.*)

FRAN. (*tenderly*). Pardon, dear Governess, 'tis only your Francisca.

LOU. And your Louisa.

FRAN. These letters are from our guardian to give consent to our marriage.

LOU. And we cannot be quite happy unless you love and bless us.

GOV. (*rising gently in her chair, throws an arm around the neck of each, looks tenderly first at one, then at the other, and kissing their foreheads, places her hands solemnly on their heads*). Heaven bless you, my much loved children.

CURTAIN.

A Grecian Bend

A Farce in One Act

By

GEORGE M. BAKER



THE SOCIAL STAGE

ORIGINAL

DRAMAS, COMEDIES, BURLESQUES,
AND ENTERTAINMENTS FOR HOME RECREATION,
SCHOOLS, AND PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

BY

GEORGE M. BAKER

CONTAINING

The Last Loaf	Lightheart's Pilgrimage
A Grecian Bend	The War of the Roses
Too Late for the Train	Thirty Minutes for Refreshments
Snow-Bound	A Little More Cider
Bon-Bons	A New Broom Sweeps Clean

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1870, BY

GEORGE M. BAKER

IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF MASSA-
CHUSETTS

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A GRECIAN BEND.

A FARCE.

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY

CHARACTERS.

MRS. FIELD, a Matron of forty.

KITTY FIELD, eighteen, } Her Daughters.
BESSIE FIELD, twelve, }

SUSY FOLLEIGH, eighteen.

JENNY SANDS, seventeen.

AUNT DERBY DENT, sixty.

NORAH, the help.

COSTUMES. — Modern and appropriate.

SCENE. — MRS. FIELD'S sitting-room. Table, R., with rocking-chair L. of it. Lounge, R., on which is reclining SUSY FOLLEIGH, reading a novel. KITTY FIELDS and JENNY SANDS seated, C; KITTY holding, and JENNY winding, a skein of worsted.

Susy. (Throwing down the book.) “Bleeding hearts!” Nothing but “bleeding hearts!” Modern novels, with their sensational plots, are so stupid! Lovely young women rescued by interesting young men. Moonlight meetings in rustling groves. How very tiresome! I'd give the world for a glance at the last new

fashion-plate, or one page of fashionable intelligence. Why do not authors, by way of variety, pay more attention to descriptions of toilet, or sketches of fashionable society? I'm sure, nothing could be more interesting than to know how people are dressing. It would certainly astonish the dwellers in this desolate spot.

Jenny. Why, Susy, you are not very complimentary to Aunt Field's beautiful place. To be sure, it is not quite so elegant as your father's fashionable home in the city. But you know you came here for change, and you can scarcely expect the display of dress and fashion to which you have been accustomed.

Susy. Oh! I like it well enough. I'm only complaining of the stupid reading we are obliged to have here. I'm dying to know the latest fashion in dress, the last new style of hat; and there is positively nothing in this book to enlighten me, although it is called a modern fashionable novel.

Kitty. Why, Susy, would you have our authors taught the dressmaker's trade before they send their books into the world?

Jenny. Yes: Susy would have them learn to *clothe* their subjects in fashionable attire before they are introduced to good society.

Susy. (*Taking up a book.*) I'm sure they need teaching. How much more interesting it would be to read that "Stella Augusta, robed in white Cashmere, adorned with bugles, gored skirt, and flowing train, hair bedecked with japonicas and moss-rose buds, a white opera cape thrown over her shoulders, appeared upon the moonlit balcony, just as Alphonso, in his becoming

shooting-jacket of black velvet, a resplendent diamond gleaming from his immaculate ruffled bosom, flowing collar and Magenta tie, lavender kids and Malacca cane, curly locks and raven mustache, advanced from the shadow of the trees ! ”

Jenny. Or “ Stella Augusta, in her spotted gingham, brown Holland, or sixpenny print, with her hair tightly curled in the remnants of ‘ The Weekly Clarion. ’ ”
(*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha !

Kitty. And “ Alphonso, in a butcher’s frock, his shapely head shorn of its auburn locks, a brown ‘ wide-awake ’ shielding his lovely mustache from the sun, advancing from the grove, gayly whistling, ‘ Oh, dear ! what can the matter be ? ’ ” Ha, ha, ha !

Susy. Girls, I am shocked at your want of delicacy. ‘ Tis the fault of your education. You have never moved in fashionable society, and can have little sympathy for the feelings of one who is out of her sphere when not moving in those circles whose boundaries guard the select.

Jenny. Oh, dear ! what privations !

Kitty. My stars ! what a martyr !

Enter MRS. FIELD, R.

Mrs. Field. Kitty, you must come into the kitchen and help me. I shall never get my washing out in the world. I’ve sent that Norah to Mr. Hanson’s for soft soap. She’s been gone an hour, and, for all I know, has tumbled into his barrel.

Kitty. I’ll come, mother. I should like a good spell at the wash-tub.

Susy. The wash-tub! You don't mean to say that you wash and scrub!

Mrs. Field. To be sure she does; and a right smart washer and ironer she is too, if I do say it.

Susy. Why, it will spoil your figure, bending over a tub. I couldn't do it.

Kitty. I'm not a bit afraid of it.

Jenny. No, indeed: 'tis a wholesome exercise, and I'll go and help you.

Norah. (*Outside, R.*) Miss Faild, Mrs Faild! I have the soap, mam.

Enter NORAH, R.

Mrs. Field. Why, Norah, where have you been?

Norah. Faith, mam, for the soap, jist. You niver towld me there was two Mr. Hansons; and I wint to the docthor's shop fust, but he had no soap; but he axed me, mam, were we well? and he towld me, mam, you should be very careful, for there's a terrible faver coome to the place, and it's breaking out iverywhere. Oh, it's myself wishes I was back in ould Ireland, sure.

Mrs. Field. A terrible fever?

Norah. Yis, mam. He called it "a Gracian Bind," that attacks the vitals, and binds one up like a jack-knife; and the pains are so orful that it lifts yer upon the tips of yer toes. Oh, musha! Oh, dear!

Kitty. Nonsense, Norah! 'Twas only a joke.

Norah. Joke, is it? Faith, it's no joke to catch the faver, sure.

Mrs. Field. Well, well; come to the kitchen at once

We shall never get the washing out at this rate. Kitty, I can do without you now. Come, Norah. [*Exit, R.*]

Norah. Yis, mam; I'm a cooming. O Miss Kitty! 'tis afraid of the faver I am. [*Exit, R.*]

Kitty. "A Grecian Bend." That's what Norah would call a *quare* name for a *faver*.

Jenny. Oh! it's only a joke of Mr. Hanson's. (*Bell rings.*) Ah! visitors.

Kitty. On washing-day! Who can it be?

Susy. I must run to my room. I'm not dressed for callers.

Enter NORAH, with a letter, R.

Norah. If you plase, Miss Susy, here's a letther; and the expressman has brought a whacking big box; and he axed, had we it too?

Kitty. What do you mean by it, Norah?

Norah. The faver, Miss Kitty. "The Gracian Bind." Oh, musha! It's kilt we are intirely.

Susy. A letter for me. (*Opens it.*) From mother. (*Sits on lounge and reads it.*)

Kitty. Nonsense, Norah: there's no fever in the place.

Jenny. But I must say I have a great curiosity to know what this "Grecian Bend" is.

Norah. Curiosity, is it? Faith, I've none to see a faver.

Mrs. Field. (*Outside, R.*) Norah, Norah!

Norah. Coomin' coomin'! Oh, dear! I've got a chill and a hot flush; and I'm sure it's the faver coomin'! Oh, dear! What will I do? What will I do?

[*Exit, R.*]

Enter AUNT DEBBY, L.

Aunt Debby. Dear me! what have I done with my speticles? I declare, I'm always losin' somethin' or nother. (*Looks on table.*) They ain't here. My fust husband used to say, (*To KITTY.*) Ain't you settin' on 'em! (*KITTY rises.*) No, they ain't there. — My fust husband — Brass-bowed. — (*To JENNY.*) P'r'aps they're in your cheer. (*JENNY rises.*) No. Where could they have gone to? — My fust husband — Cost nine and six. — (*To SUSY.*) P'r'aps they're on the sofa. (*SUSY rises.*) No. I declare, where can they have gone to?

Kitty. Aunt Debby, what's that on your forehead?

Aunt Debby. (*Removes spectacles from her forehead.*) My speticles, I do declare! Well, well: my memory is ginnin out. My fust husband used to say — (*Goes to table.*) Anybody seen my scissors? (*To JENNY.*) — Won't you please git up; p'r'aps they're in your cheer. (*JENNY rises.*) No. My fust husband — him as was a Spooner, Hiram Spooner. — (*To KITTY.*) — Won't you please let me look in your cheer? (*KITTY rises.*) No: they ain't there. Spooner says, says he — Sharp-pinted — (*To SUSY.*) — Shall I trouble you ag'in? (*SUSY rises.*) No. Where on airth have them scissors got to?

Jenny. Aunt Debby, what's that hanging at your side?

Aunt Debby. Them plaguy scissors, as sure as I'm alive! Well, well: it does beat all natur! It's jest what my fust husband always said. Says he, Debby, you're so forgetful, you'll forget you've got a husband.

and be marryin' ag'in, some day. But I never did — as long as he lived, any way. (*Sits in rocking-chair and darns stockings.*)

Susy. Oh, isn't this splendid! A new sensation in fashionable circles. Mother has written me all about it.

Jenny. A new sensation! What is it?

Kitty. Something to do with "women's rights?"

Jenny. A new bonnet?

Kitty. Something good to eat?

Jenny. Or a new book?

Susy. Neither. 'Tis "the Grecian Bend."

Jenny and Kitty. "The Grecian Bend?"

Aunt Debby. Greasy Ben? Why, that must be John Hodgkins's son, that my second husband, him as was a Skinner, pulled out of the taller vat. They called him Greasy Ben ever arterwards. I want to know if you've got a letter from him?

Kitty. No, no, Aunt Debby: Susy has a letter from her mother, acquainting her with some new fashion.

Aunt Debby. Do tell! Are they wearin' bumbazines or gingham mostly? And how's cotton — hey?

Jenny. The "Grecian Bend!" Why, that's Norah's faver.

Kitty. Oh, do tell us what it is!

Susy. No: I will give you an agreeable surprise. Mother has sent me every thing necessary for a display of the new fashion. When you next see me, you shall know all. Good-by. [*Exit, L.*

Jenny. Now, isn't this provoking!

Kitty. A proud, stuck-up thing!

Jenny. But a good heart, Kitty. I'm sure we both

love her dearly. Susy has been spoiled by over-indulgence. You know her parents are very fashionable people.

Kitty. I know they are; but that's no reason why she should come here and put on such airs. Her father and mine were nothing but travelling peddlers once. I think she might tell us about this new sensation, as she calls it.

Bessie. (*Outside, R.*) School's done. School's done. Oh, ain't I glad!

[*Enter R., throws her books into one corner, her hat in another, and her shawl on the table.*]

Hallo, Kitty! Hallo, Cousin Jenny! Oh, we've had such splendid fun to-day! Hallo, Aunt Debby! I've got home.

Aunt Debby. Well, you needn't have told on it. Such a racket I never did hear!

Bessie. Oh! yes you have, Aunt Debby. Ain't you going to give me a kiss? (*Puts her arm around AUNT DEBBY's neck, and kisses her.*)

Aunt Debby. Massy sakes! You've ruined my new cap!

Bessie. Well, it's too bad. But never mind; I'll iron it for you. Oh, such fun! I'll tell you all about it. Miss Jinks, our teacher, has got it.

Kitty. Got what?

Bessie. "The Grecian Bend."

Jenny. "The Grecian Bend" again.

Bessie. Yes: we were all in school, and having such

fun, throwing spit-balls, and making faces, and playing cat's-cradle, when the door opened, and in came Miss Jinks. My! such a figure! She looked, for all the world, like our speckled hen Fanny, when she waddles about hunting for crumbs, so — (*imitates*). She had a brand new black dress, with a trail, Oh! a mile long, I guess; and such high-heeled boots! She walked so — (*imitates*), and held her hands so — (*imitates*); and her nose was red, and her corkscrew curls stuck out, and — and — Oh, dear! I can't tell what she did look like! She was so funny! and the girls giggled, and the boys laughed right out! Tom Mason said she was sick; and Bobby Sawyer, he said she was in affliction! and Fred Jordan, he whispered to me she had "the Grecian Bend!" Oh, it was so funny!

Jenny. Kitty, we've a full description of it now.

Kitty. But I don't understand it.

Bessie. Well, here it is, exact. (*Produces a picture.*) Charlie Haddam gave it to me, and it looks just like Miss Jinks.

Kitty. (*Taking picture.*) Why, what a fright!

Bessie. Just like Miss Jinks!

Jenny. She looks as though she was going to fall.

Bessie. Just like Miss Jinks!

Kitty. It's black in the face!

Bessie. Just like Miss Jinks!

Aunt Debby. What Jinks is that? I used to know a Sally Jinks: she was a second cousin to my third husband, him as was a Moody.

Bessie. Oh! this ain't her, Aunt Debby. But where's mother? Where's Norah? I'm as hungry as

a bear; and I want a piece of mince-pie and a pickle
Norah, Norah!

Norah. (*Outside, R.*) Coomin', coomin'!

Enter R.

Bessie. Hallo, Norah: I've got something for you.

Norah. What is it, honey?

Bessie. (*Gives her the picture.*) "The Grecian Bend."

Norah. (*Drops the picture.*) Oh, murder, murder!
It's the faver. It's kilt I am intirely! [*Exit, R.*

Bessie. Ha, ha, ha! the faver! What does she mean by that?

Kitty. Some one has been telling her "the Grecian Bend" is a fever, and the poor girl really believes it.

Bessie. Does she? Oh, isn't that fun! Won't I plague her! But I'll have my mince-pie and pickle first. [*Exit, R.*

Jenny. We have discovered Susy's secret.

Kitty. Yes; and I propose to make a good use of it.

Jenny. How, pray?

Kitty. We know her silly passion for dress. Aunt Debby will be sure to remain here for the next hour. I am going to her room. You shall go with me; and I will describe a little plot I have in my mind, by which we may amuse ourselves, and perhaps give Susy a lesson.

Jenny. A little plot! So you have a secret, as well as Susy.

Kitty. Which I will tell you, for I shall need your assistance. So come with me.

[*Exeunt KITTY and JENNY, L.*

Aunt Debby. Now them gals are up to mischief. I never see two critters with their heads together so close, but what there's some kind of mischief brewin'.

[*Enter SUSY, L., in "Grecian Bend," rich dress, high-heeled boots, long train, pannier, &c., tottering slowly, endeavoring to keep her balance, and her hands in the position usually represented in the prints.*]

What on airth is that? Hosy said there was a caravan in town; and I do believe one of the *annemiles* has broken loose. It looks like a kangaroo. Shoo, shoo! Go away, go away, or I'll holler.

Susy. Oh, dear! I'm so tired. This waist is so tight, and this Bend is so painful! If it wasn't the fashion, I should say it was very ridiculous. (*Attempts to walk, and nearly falls.*) Dear me! I shall fall.

Aunt Debby. Shoo, shoo! Scat! Will you go away?

Susy. Why, Aunt Debby! don't you know me? It's Susy Folleigh.

Aunt Debby. Land sakes! You don't say so! Why, what's the matter? Got the rheumatics, or the sciat-iky? or you going to faint — hey?

Susy. No, no.

Aunt Debby. Where's my camphire? (*Runs to table.*) Where on airth is my camphire! That's jest like me! Never can find nothin'. Here, Sarah! Sarah Jane! Norah! Water! Water! Quick!

Susy. Why, Aunt Debby, I'm quite well. (*Attempts to walk, and totters.*)

Aunt Debby. There you go.

[*Enter NORAH, R., with a glass of water on a tray, stumbles over the long train of SUSY's dress, and drops tray.*]

Susy. You stupid thing! Couldn't you see my dress?

Aunt Debby. (*Leads SUSY to lounge.*) This poor child is sick.

Susy. I assure you nothing is the matter. I'm only practising "the Grecian Bend."

Norah. "The Gracian Bind," is it? Oh, masha! the faver's in the house, and we're all kilt intirely! Oh, murder! Will I run for the docthor?

Aunt Debby. (*Runs to table.*) Where's my fan? Massy sakes! where's my fan? Gone: that's jest like me!

Norah. Will I run to the docthor's for a *proscription*? She's doubled up! It's the symptims intirely!

Susy. Will you oblige me by stopping your meddling. I am quite well, and want none of your attentions.

Aunt Debby. Well, I'm glad of that. (*Goes back to table.*) I did think you had an attack of rheumatics; and I'm awful skeery about it, for my fourth husband, Deacon Higgins, —

Norah. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! The faver, the faver! I'll run for the docthor, sure! (*Starts for door, and meets BESSIE, who enters, R.*) — Oh, you poor, dear

child! you mustn't come a-near the faver, or it's a poor lone orphan you'll be, sure.

Bessie. What's the matter, Norah?

Norah. It's the faver, — "the Gracian Bind." Miss Susy has it. Whist! Be quiet, darlin'! I'll run for the docthor.

Bessie. Oh, my! Susy's got a "Grecian Bend!" Oh, isn't this fun! Where are you going, Norah?

Norah. For a proscription to kill the faver.

Bessie. That isn't the fever, Norah; that's the new fashion. Everybody is going to adopt it. It will be raging.

Norah. It's catchin', and I've niver been vassinated.

Bessie. Yes: everybody, even the servants, must dress in that way. You must have one.

Norah. Must I? Will it keep off the faver?

Bessie. Yes. Oh, yes! it's a sure preventive.

Norah. But where will I get it?

Bessie. You come with me. I'll fix you all right.

Norah. Will I look like that? 'Twill break my back intirely.

Bessie. I'll fix you up so nice! Come along.

[*Exit, R.*

Norah. Yes, darling! Faith, she's a bright little thing to hilp a body in distress.

[*Exit, R.*

Aunt Debby. Shan't I make you a little soothin' yarb tea?

Susy. No.

Aunt Debby. Some hot water for your feet.

Susy. No.

Aunt Debby. A little pennyrial —

Susy. No: I want nothing — but to be let alone.

Aunt Debby. Well, of all the kantagarus things that ever I did see! Why don't you lean back on the sofy?

Susy. (Aside.) I wish I could. It won't let me. I'd go back to my room, but I'm afraid to start, for fear I should tumble.

Enter NORAH.

Norah. Faix, here's another with it, mam, and she wants to see Miss Folleigh.

Susy. To see me? Show her up, Norah.

Norah. She's a coomin', ma'am. [*Exit NORAH, R.*]

[*Enter JENNY, dressed in short red petticoat, with overskirt of brown, pinned up all around: a "pillow," high-heeled shoes, red stockings, small white shawl, roomy bonnet to hide her face: the dress of thirty years ago, in imitation of "the Grecian Bend."*]

Susy. Whom have we here, I wonder.

Jenny. Miss Folleigh, I believe. (*SUSY bows.*) Glad to see you. I am Miss Rebecca Short, the leader of the *tun* in this place. I heerd there was a fashionable young lady here who had the "bend." You see, I have it too; and as I never had seen a real "bend," I thought I'd better give you a call. You must know I heerd of the bend from my brother Darius, who seed it in Saratogy. He told me what it was like, and I've fixed it up as well as I could, to git the start of that pesky Hannah Long, who's forever trying to get the start of me. How is it about the style? (*Struts round.*)

Susy. (Aside.) Mercy! what a fright!

Jenny. Now, speak right out: don't be mealy-mouthed: for of all things I detest a flatterer.

Susy. Well, then, Miss — Miss —

Jenny. Short: Rebecca Short.

Aunt Lebbv. Short? Becky Short? Be you any connection of the Shorts of Saccarap?

Jenny. Not the least in the world.

Aunt Debby. Oh! I thought p'r'aps you might be my fifth husband's —

Jenny. Miss Folleigh, won't you please stand up and step round a little, so I can see how you look?

Susy. (*Aside.*) Well, of all the impertinent people that ever I did see!

Kitty. (*Outside, &c.*) Up stairs — hey? Now, don't trouble yourself. I'll find the way.

Jenny. That pesky Hannah Long, as sure as preaching! She's some to see the fashions too.

[*Enter KITTY, dressed similarly to JENNY, in old-fashioned style, made more ridiculous if possible.*]

Kitty. Miss Folleigh — Why, Becky Short! You here?

Jenny. To be sure I am: in the latest style too. I've got the start of you, Miss Long.

Kitty. Oh! have you? Well, I never did see such a ridiculous dress in all my life, never!

Jenny. Well, then, you'd better look in the glass, and you will.

Kitty. What do you mean by that? A pretty leader of the *tun* you are!

Jenny. Do you call that "the Grecian Bend?"

Susy. (*Aside.*) I do believe they will quarrel! Dear me! what a ridiculous situation! Ladies, I beg you'll be quiet: Aunt Debby there has a very bad headache.

Aunt Debby. Why, what a whopper? I never had such a thing in all my life.

Jenny. Won't you please stand up, and let us see your "bend?"

Kitty. Do, Miss Folleigh: I'm dying to see you.

Susy. You're a couple of inquisitive females. Do you suppose I'm going to make an exhibition of myself for your benefit?

Jenny. Law! Now don't fly up. Congenial sperits, you know.

Kitty. Yes: twin worshippers at the shrine of Fashion.

Aunt Debby. Twins — did you say? Well, I declare! I thought you were twins, the minute I set my eyes onto you.

Jenny. (*To KITTY.*) If you hadn't come here, I should have found out all about it.

Kitty. If it hadn't been for you I should have surprised the whole town.

Jenny. You're a meddler! (*Flout their parasols in each other's faces.*)

Kitty. You're a busybody!

Susy. Oh, dear! what a ridiculous situation! Ladies, ladies! what is the matter?

Kitty. It's Long.

Jenny. It's Short.

Aunt Debby. (*Who has been hanging round JENNY*

and KITTY, carefully inspecting their dresses, with spectacles on her nose.) They're a couple of thieves! That are is my bunnet. (To JENNY.) I knowd it the moment I sot my eyes onto it. My fifth husband, Jotham Snodgrass, bought it for four dollars and a half. And that's my petticoat, that I quilted the year afore I buried my fourth husband: bless his poor departed soul! It was yaller then; and when he died, I had it dyed blue. That's where my things go to. Here, Sarah! Sarah Jane! Sarah Jane Field! Thieves! Norah, Norah! Thieves!

Norah. (Outside, R.) Coomin', coomin', mam!

[Enter NORAH, dressed in short red petticoat, which discloses a pair of men's heavy cowhide boots; an overskirt of calico, made to "stick out" by a half-concealed work-basket of good size; a green shawl on her shoulders; a wide-awake hat on her head, adorned with a peacock's feather; white cotton gloves and an umbrella. The whole should be made very ridiculous.]

Susy. (Starting from sofa.) Gracious! What have we here!

Aunt Debby. Land of liberty sakes! What a looking critter!

Norah. If you plase, it's "the Grecian Bind," which Miss Bessie gave me.

All. "The Grecian Bend!"

Enter MRS. FIELD, R.

Mrs. Field. Aunt Debby, what on earth are you yelling so for? Gracious! I didn't know you had

company. Why, Norah, what are you doing here? I've been looking for you for the last half hour. Here's my washing not out yet.

Norah. If you please, mam, I couldn't help it. Miss Bessie said I must have "the Gracian Bind," or I'd lose my situation.

Mrs. Field. But who are these ladies?

Aunt Debby. Ladies? They're thieves! They've been at my things. That's my bunnet, and that's my shawl and petticoat.

Mrs. Field. But they're friends of Miss Susy.

Susy. Indeed they're not. I never saw them before, and I never want to see them again.

Mrs. Field. Pray, what is your business here then?

Jenny. I came to help you wash.

Kitty. And so did I.

Mrs. Field. To help me wash? But who are you?

Jenny. (*Takes off her bonnet.*) Miss Short.

Kitty. (*Takes off her bonnet.*) Miss Long.

Mrs. Field. Jenny! Kitty!

Aunt Debby. That's the Long and the Short of it.

Susy. What! you girls rigged up in that fashion?

Jenny. It's the last new sensation, Susy.

Kitty. A little secret. You understand, Susy.

Mrs. Field. Well, I'd like to know what this is all about.

Aunt Debby. It's a regular mystification.

Kitty. Susy understands it — don't you, Susy?

Susy. I understand you have been laughing at me, and I'm not surprised at it; for, of all the contemptible

fashions that ever were invented, I think "the Grecian Bend" exceeds any thing I ever heard of. At any rate, you shall never see or hear any more of it during my stay here.

Jenny. I'm glad you are not offended, Susy; for i was only a little bit of fun.

Kitty. With a bit of a moral.

Susy. Ah! there's a moral — is there?

Kitty. Yes: that there's but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Susy. I'll accept the moral; but what's to be done with Norah?

Norah. If you plase, I'd like to be undone: the thing on my back is killing me intirely.

Enter BESSIE, R.

Bessie. Please, mother, may I have "a Grecian Bend?" All the girls are going to have them.

Mrs. Field. I'll give you a "bend" that you'll remember, for taking Norah away from her washing. Mercy sakes! I shall never get my washing out. Was there ever such a plague as a house full of girls!

Aunt Debby Never! My sixth husband —

Mrs. Field. Oh! never mind him. Who's going to help me with the wash? I shall never get the wash out. Who will help me?

Kitty. I will, mother.

Jenny. And I, aunt.

Susy. And I; for I think it would be very useful to me.

All. Useful!

Susy. Yes: for, in the first place, I shall learn to wash; and, in the second place, I'm convinced it is just the exercise necessary to prepare me to bear with resignation, when I reach home, the latest infliction of fashion, — "A Grecian Bend."

SITUATIONS.

3 JESSIE, MORGAN, MRS. F., KITTY, JENNY, SUSY. 2

A SAD MISTAKE

A Musical Comedy in One Act

BY

ALICE P. CARTER

AUTHOR OF "THE FAIRY STEEPLCROWN," ETC.

A SAD MISTAKE.

CHARACTERS.

MADAME LA CONTESSA, *an old aristocrat.*

HORTENSE, } *her nieces.*
SOPHIE, }

VALERIE,

FIVE YOUNG LADIES, *friends of theirs.*

A MAIDSERVANT.

GASTON, *a wild youth. (May be played by a girl, as he does not appear in male attire.)*

COSTUMES.

Any period may be chosen within wide limits to suit the taste or convenience of the players.

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MUSIC.

The music for this piece, with the exception of "*C'est le Regiment qui Passe*," for which any simple jingle may be substituted, may be obtained of the publishers at the following prices:—

RUDDYGORE (<i>vocal score</i>)	\$1.00
"SOLOMON LEVI" (<i>College Songs</i>)	.50
PRINCE PRO TEM. (<i>vocal score</i>)	1.40
"LIKE THE LARK" (<i>Alt.</i>)	.35

A SAD MISTAKE.

Scene.—*A parlor. HORTENSE, SOPHIE, VALERIE and five other young ladies discovered. At the rising of the curtain, the young ladies are facing the audience in rows of four. At the beginning of the air, they make a very low curtsy, then form into a square as for a quadrille. They then begin to sing and to dance a minuet.**

CHORUS.

(Air from "Ruddygore."—Page 61.)

Gracefully moving to and fro,
With waving hands and stately paces,
Through the mazy dance we go
With demurest faces.
Here is nothing light or quick of motion;
Here are no rude reels nor country dances.
Softly gliding, on we go
With sereneest glances.
O, what a stately mien!
O, what a high-bred air!
As on we go, thus to and fro,
Noble maidens, young and fair.

Of the old régime are we,
With sweeping trains and powdered tresses;
Noble maidens all, you see,
In our newest dresses.
A low-bred country maid may frisk and gambol,
While in vulgar reels she kicks and prances,
But noble maidens such as we
Join in measured dances.
O, what a stately mien!
O, what a high-bred air!
As on we go, thus to and fro,
Noble maidens, young and fair.

[At the end of the dance, the girls form a half circle, with HORTENSE right, SOPHIE left and VALERIE in the centre.]

* At the original representation, some figures from the Lancers were used, with the minuet step.

Hortense. There ! That goes very well, indeed.

Sophie. Yes, and now we must explain to our guests why we have invited them to spend a week with us. You see, my dear girls, our father's uncle, the Count de Beauvilliers, married a lady of large fortune, and since his death our parents have been perfectly devoted to her, in hopes that she may leave our father her fortune, instead of leaving it to her nephew.

Valerie. Which she naturally would do, I should think.

Hortense. Ah ! But the nephew is not a courtier like our father, and therefore has not half his address. Our mother, also, understands such things perfectly, and both of them know how to play their cards well.

Sophie. But you see, as the old lady lives at a distance, we five girls have never seen her ; but now, at last, she is coming to-morrow to make us a visit, and of course there are great preparations to receive her. You see we all have new dresses, which we are wearing to-day, to be sure that they are all right.

Hortense. And as she wrote to Papa that she hoped we had all been well instructed in dancing, and that she hoped to see us in a minuet, we thought we would invite a few friends to help us, for we mean to leave no stone unturned to make ourselves agreeable to the old lady. We mean to fairly make love to her.

Valerie. I don't think it's nice at all.

Sophie. What isn't nice ?

Valerie. Why, it doesn't seem to me right to flatter an old lady, just to get her money.

Hortense. O, what a little Miss Virtue ! It's quite clear that *your* father is not one of the courtiers of his Gracious Majesty, Louis Fifteenth. (*All curtsy low.*) When you know a little more of the world, Mademoiselle, you will understand that it is quite out of fashion to be very particular about one's behavior.

Sophie. Yes. Our father says that the great motto for these days is, " Each for himself," and—and—you know the rest.

Valerie. You mean " Each for himself, and Devil take the hindmost " ?
[*General exclamation of horror from all the young ladies.*]

Sophie. Mademoiselle ! I think you forget yourself.

Hortense. You are really not fit company for young ladies of family.

Valerie. I thought you said just now that one must not be too particular—that it was out of fashion—so I thought I'd try you.

Hortense. Did I say that etiquette was out of fashion ? I referred to conscience.

Valerie. O, only conscience ! I see.

Hortense. It is against all etiquette for a young lady of family to mention the name of the—the—the colored gentleman.

SONG.

Air—"Solomon Levi."

HORTENSE (*sings*). My father says, and I'm sure he knows,
 'Tis always foolish quite
 To ask oneself without any need
 Whether things are wrong or right.
 Then each for himself, and do as you please,
 Is quite the wisest plan
 We all may follow, but never must speak
 Of the colored gentleman.

(Chorus.)

Then each for himself, and do as you please,
 Is quite the wisest plan
 We all may follow, but never must speak
 Of the colored gentleman.

The old ideas are all very well,
 But obsolete quite I'm sure,
 In the glorious days of Louis XV.

(All curtsey.)

And of Madame Pompadour.
 Then each for himself, and do as you please,
 Is quite the wisest plan
 We all may follow, but never must speak
 Of the colored gentleman.

(Chorus.)

Then each for himself, etc.

Valerie. Well, I can only say that I'm very thankful that I was not brought up with those ideas myself.

Sophie. O, my dear child! You have always lived in the country.

Valerie. But so have you.

Sophie. Ah! But *our* father is a courtier, and *we* have been brought up in a court atmosphere.

Valerie. And I in the pure sweet atmosphere of the country, far away from court influences, and I'm very thankful for it.

Enter a SERVANT, *carrying a letter on a waiter. She gives it with a bow to HORTENSE, and exit.*

Hortense. The de Vallais arms. From my friend Henriette, who is prevented from joining us by a severe cold. (*Reads.*) "My dearest Hortense: My brother Louis, being one of the King's pages, has another page, Gaston de Vars, to visit him. Gaston is a bright boy of fifteen, full of fun; but as he intends to carry his fun a little too far, I write to warn you to be on your guard. Yesterday Louis and Gaston acted a little play for us, and Gaston made such a capital old woman, that he has determined to play a terrible trick. Having heard from me of your aunt's intended visit, and of your parents having gone to Paris to pre-

pare for it, this naughty boy is going to pass himself off on you as the old lady, pretending to arrive a day too soon. I need not say more. Forewarned is forearmed. Adieu, my dearest.—Your loving friend, HENRIETTE.”—O, the wretch! To think of playing such a trick on young ladies of our position! We must punish him well. Yes, he shall rue it. So he expects great fun!

Sophie. If he were only a little older, it wouldn't be so bad. I might have some fun then myself.

Hortense. O, indeed! Perhaps you would expect to fascinate him!

Sophie. Stranger things have happened!

Hortense. To be sure. There *have* been miracles on the earth. You forget that I should be there too.

Sophie. Miracles? O, yes! You mean you might have fascinated the young man. That certainly would be a miracle.

Hortense (*to VALERIE*). Do you know, Valerie, that Sophie never dares to look in the glass at the same time as myself?

Sophie. If that were true, I should never see myself at all, for I can never find a glass that you are not looking in.

Hortense. She never tried. She only dares to look in the glass when it's too dark to see herself. Otherwise she would suffer too great a shock.

Sophie. Hortense! Do you wish me to scratch you?

[*Advances.* HORTENSE *advances*; VALERIE *steps between them.*

Valerie. My dear girls! Etiquette, etiquette!

Hortense. Etiquette is all very well, but human nature is better. Let me see if I can scratch too. (*She presses forward.*) She fascinate the young man!

Valerie (*separating them*). But, Hortense! Sophie! He is not a young man at all.

Hortense. O, to be sure!

Sophie. Yes. I really forgot. He's only a boy.

DUET.

(*Air—"The Prince Pro Tem."*—Page 83.)

HORTENSE. What's the use of quarrelling about him?

SOPHIE. I'm sure I'll give him up with joy.

HORTENSE. So will I.

SOPHIE. This is why

BOTH. We quite forgot he's but a boy.

SOPHIE. What's a boy, that we should fight about him?

HORTENSE. And what's a boy that we should care?

SOPHIE. Who cares about him?

HORTENSE. O, how we'll flout him!

BOTH. Make the little villain swear!

If he attempts to deceive us.

SOPHIE. Let him try!

HORTENSE. Let him try!

SOPHIE. Just let him come!

HORTENSE. Yes. Let him come!
 BOTH. See if he pleased will be.
 Yes, that we soon shall see.
 If he expects to deceive us.
 SOPHIE. Let him try!
 HORTENSE. Let him try!
 SOPHIE. Just let him come!
 HORTENSE. Yes, let him come!
 BOTH. See if he pleased will be.

Enter the SERVANT ; She advances to the centre.

Servant (*announcing*). Madame la Comtesse Marie Sophie Louise Artemise Adelaïde de Belmont de la Croix de Beauvilliers. *[Exit SERVANT.*

Sophie. And we haven't had time to decide how to receive him, the little wretch !

Hortense. Nevermind. We'll do our best. We'll begin by being only rather pert, and make up the rest as we go along.

Sophie. Yes. We'll keep getting worse and worse. Here he comes !

Hortense. The impudent young scamp !

[The girls divide, leaving room for the entrance of the COUNTESS in the centre.

Enter COUNTESS.

Countess (*makes low curtseys to each side*). Good-morning, young ladies, good-morning. I have ascertained from your domestics that my letter announcing my premature arrival has not been received. *[The girls make little bobbing curtseys, look at each other, and giggle.*

Hortense. How d'ye do, Aunt ?

Sophie. How d'ye do, Aunt ? *[They both hide their faces and laugh.*

Countess (*aside*). What manners ! Are these the grand-nieces of my deceased husband, the Count de Bouvilliers ? (*Aloud.*) My dear young ladies, if you have not been properly instructed, allow me to show you how to receive a guest. (*Imitates them.*) "How d'ye do, Aunt ? How d'ye do, Aunt ?" Now, this is better etiquette. (*Curtseys.*) Welcome, thrice welcome, Madame la Comtesse. We are your Grace's most humble servants.

Hortense (*curtseys awkwardly*). Like this ?

Countess. That is perhaps somewhat improved. Are you my eldest niece, Hortense ?

Hortense. Yes. Here I am, large as life.

Countess (*aside*). "Large as life !" But I must not be too hard on them. (*Aloud.*) You may approach and kiss my cheek.

Hortense (*aside*). Oh ! I dare say ! The impudent boy ! (*Aloud.*) Thank you. I'm really not fond of kissing. You know it's quite out of fashion. It's no longer etiquette.

Countess. What? Have I lived to be instructed in etiquette by a grand-niece by marriage? I who was one of the ornaments of the court of his Majesty Louis Fourteenth of happy memory! (*Curtseys low.*) I to be instructed! (*Turns her back upon HORTENSE and regards SOPHIE.*) You may approach and salute me.

Sophie (*aside*). The wretch! I'm not to be caught! (*Aloud.*) O, dear Aunt! I've such a cold-sore on my lip.

Countess. There is no such blemish perceptible. Is this insolence?

Sophie. O, no! Only, you see, we feel rather bashful.

Countess. If that be your excuse, reassure yourselves. In spite of my exalted rank, I am very gracious and condescending. My arrival being somewhat inopportune——

Hortense. Oh! Never mind. We are not really afraid of you. Sophie was only making fun of you. Papa said, "If the old lady comes before we get back, just look after her, and keep her good-natured. She's a queer old thing." (*Aside.*) Oh! what fibs I'm telling! (*Aloud.*) Don't you want to see us dance?

Sophie. We were just practising a minuet.

Countess. I cannot believe that you can dance a minuet.

Sophie. O, yes, we can. Do you want to see us?

Countess. I am curious to see your method. Yes, you have my permission. [*The COUNTESS retires to back of stage.*

The girls repeat their minuet.

Countess (*advances*). That is quite passable, better than I had dared to hope; but allow me to show you how we danced in the days when I was young. Albeit somewhat stiff with advancing years, I can yet show you something of the ancient grace and poetry of motion.

[*The COUNTESS begins a minuet. After about ten steps the music suddenly changes to a jig, and the girls begin to dance it. They surround the COUNTESS, and at last seize her and whirl her around, forcing her to dance. At last she disengages herself.*

Countess. Young ladies! Young ladies! Are these maidens of the French nobility, or a parcel of milkmaids? What scandalous behavior!

Hortense. Aunt Artemise! Do let me see your feet.

Countess. My feet? (*Puts out one foot.*) What for, pray?

Hortense. When I caught sight of them just now, I thought they looked as if they were made for jack-boots.

Countess. Mademoiselle!

Sophie. Aunt Artemise, I hope you don't begin to shave yet. Have you any razors?

Countess. You insolent minion!

Hortense. What do they do to you when you get tipsy? Do they lock you up?

Sophie. Aunt Gaston—I mean Aunt Artemise, what's your salary?

Hortense. What's your pocket-money?

Countess. My salary? My pocket-money? Let me tell you, you impertinent minxes, that I have an income of my own which even my nearest relations little dream of. I had intended to leave half of my property to your father, but you may tell him that after the scandalous insults which I have received from his daughters, I shall not leave him one franc. I shall return home and make my will. *[The COUNTESS turns to go, but pauses at the back as the chorus begins.]*

CHORUS.

(Air—"C'est le Regiment qui Passe.")

O, she's going to make her will!
O, she's going to make her will!
And we only hope she'll leave us all enormous legacies.
O, she's going to make her will!
O, she's going to make her will!
And we hope she very soon will die, and leave us what we please.
O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!
And she's going to leave us all her savings!

(During the chorus the COUNTESS rushes forward and continues to turn from side to side, with frantic gestures. Before the second verse she tries to rush out.)

No, you cannot run away,
For we mean to have our say.
O, you horrid little villain! O, you wretched little cheat!
No, you cannot run away,
For we mean to have our say.
O, what a trick you meant to play! O, wouldn't it be sweet?
O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!

(Sudden change from mockery to anger.)

Oh! Oh! We'd like to scratch your eyes out!
So now you may believe
That you cannot us deceive.
O, you impudent young rascal! What a trick you tried to play!
So now you may believe
That you cannot us deceive.
You thought to have a merry time, if you could have your way.

(The COUNTESS seems about to faint, but recovers herself as the next words begin.)

O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!
O, what a dear old bird it is!

(Change to anger.)

Oh! Oh! We'd wring your neck with pleasure!

[*The girls rush at the COUNTESS, tear off her cloak and hat, pinch and slap her. They pursue her round and round the stage, till she escapes and rushes off. They advance to the front, laughing. HORTENSE right, SOPHIE left, VALERIE centre.*

Hortense. I don't believe he enjoyed his visit half so much as he expected. Do you?

Sophie. O, how angry he was! But how well he acted an old lady!

Hortense. And looked it too! I would not have believed such a thing was possible.

Enter SERVANT. *She advances to centre.*

Servant. Madame la Comtesse Marie Sophie Louise Artemise Adelaide de Belmont de la Croix de Beauvilliers.

Sophie. What! Has she come back?

Servant. No, Mademoiselle. This is another lady, who has come by the other entrance. She says that she also is Madame la Comtesse Marie Sophie Louise Artemise Adelaide de Belmont de la Croix de Beauvilliers. [Exit SERVANT.

Hortense. This must be the real aunt. How strange!

Enter GASTON as an old woman.

Gaston (*speaking in a high falsetto voice*). How d'ye do, girls? How d'ye do, girls? (*Looks at them all.*) Charming, charming! [*The girls all curtsey very low.*

Sophie. O, Madame la Comtesse! (*Repeated curtseys.*) We do not yet venture to call you Aunt.

Gaston. O, yes! Call me Aunt, by all means.

Hortense (*with many curtseys*). O, dearest and most respected Aunt, our parents will be in an abyss of despair at not being here to receive you with due honor.

Gaston. Never mind. My own fault. Got here too soon.

DUET.

Air—"Like the Lark," by A. B.

HORTENSE and SOPHIE. We have waited for your coming
Day by day and year by year,
And our hearts with joy are swelling,
Now we see your Grace appear.

With what bliss we now behold you,
When you meet our longing eye.
In our hearts we do enfold you.
O, how sweet this holy tie!

Yes, our joy is past revealing,
As we now our bliss declare,
For the thought that you are with us
Steals like music through the air.

Hortense. O, Aunt Artemise! Can it be possible? At last, at last do we see you, after all this waiting, this long-ing?

Gaston. Yes, my dear. You see me. That's quite certain. Here I am.

Sophie. I should have known you in any disguise.

Gaston (*starts*). Disguise? What did you say?

Sophie. I say, I should have known you even as a stranger, or even in disguise.

Gaston. But how?

Sophie. By that air of distinction, that majesty, that indefinable something, which would have told me that this could be no other than the Comtesse de Beauvilliers.

Gaston. O, what a sweet child! (*He holds her hand, patting it softly.*) You're quite a dear.

Hortense (*aside*). Mercy! We can't have favoritism. (*Aloud.*) O, dear Aunt! Are you surprised at what Sophie says? Why, I should have recognized you in the dark.

Gaston. Dear me! How?

Hortense. Partly by your lovely voice, in which I hear the tones of the true aristocrat. (*Aside.*) It grates like a file, and is as sharp as a meat-axe, but never mind. (*Aloud.*) But not only by your voice. O, no!

Gaston. And in what other way?

Hortense (*with hands on her heart*). Through my heart, dear Aunt. By that instinctive voice of nature, which would have said to me, "Here is the beloved aunt whom you have long beheld in nightly dreams."

Gaston. And am I like your dreams?

Hortense. Yes, dearest Aunt; but the reality far surpasses them.

Gaston. What a darling you are! I think you're too sweet. You know I always *did* like girls older than myself, like you.

Hortense (*pulling away her hands*). What!

Sophie. What did you say?

Gaston. Oh! I—I—I mean when I was a little boy—no, no—that is—when I was a little girl.

Hortense (*aside; touching her forehead*). A little queer in her mind. (*Aloud.*) O, yes, I understand. I am the oldest, of course, but Sophie is only a year younger.

Sophie. Aren't you ashamed? I'm a year and eight months younger. (*To GASTON.*) My nurse told me that when I was born Hortense could already talk—and bite. She bit me, and said I was a beast. She was jealous, and she's been so ever since.

Hortense. Jealous? What of, I wonder? Sophie is always interrupting. (*In a loud aside to GASTON.*) She's so untrained.

You never would suppose she was a young lady of quality. Our parents are in despair about her. They sometimes wonder whether she is not a changeling.

Sophie. What are you saying?

Hortense. O, nothing, nothing.

Sophie (*stamps her foot*). What were you saying about me?

Hortense. Oh! She has such a temper!

Sophie. Temper! Which of us has the worst temper, I wonder! Just ask the other girls, Aunt.

Gaston (*who has been regarding them uneasily*). Yes, yes. I'll ask the other girls. (*Turns away.*) I'll leave you to settle this little question between yourselves.

Hortense. No, no. Some of those girls are not your nieces at all.

Gaston. My nieces? O, yes. To be sure. (*He still turns towards the others; HORTENSE and SOPHIE detain him.*) But I want to see them all. Nice girls! O, that one's pretty! (*HORTENSE and SOPHIE still hold him; he struggles.*) Let me go! Let me go, I tell you. (*Change of voice.*) Sacr-r-ré! Mille diables! [*The girls let him go, and he speaks to the others.*]

Sophie. Good heavens! A countess swear like that!

Hortense. She's a little out of her head.

Sophie. Well, I should think so! Did you hear her voice?

[*VALERIE leads HORTENSE and SOPHIE forward.*]

Valerie. My dear girls, I've been wondering all this time how you know which of those aunts is the real one.

Hortense (*vaguely*). Which? (*Wildly.*) Which?

Sophie. Which is the—the—the—real one?

Valerie. Don't you think that this one is most like a boy in disguise? I do.

Sophie. What! This Gaston?

Hortense. This the king's page?

[*HORTENSE and SOPHIE seize GASTON and bring him forward.*]

Hortense. Let me look at you!

Sophie. You are not that wretched, impudent——

Gaston. How you look at me! What's the matter? O, dear! (*Wriggles.*) O, dear! (*In a changed voice.*) It's all up! I must get out of this.

[*He picks up his skirts to his knees, showing high boots, and exit running.*]

Hortense. And who was the other aunt?

Sophie. She was the real one!

[*Faints in the arms of her sisters, left.*]

Hortense. And she's gone to make her will! [*Faints, right.*]

CHORUS.

O, she's gone to make her will!
O, she's gone to make her will!
O, misery! O, misery!
O, what a sad mistake!
O, she's gone to make her will!
O, she's gone to make her will!
O, dear! What will become of them?
O, dear! Their hearts will break!

[The curtain falls, while the piano continues and finishes the air.]

SLIGHTED TREASURES.

A PETITE COMEDY

IN ONE ACT.

SLIGHTED TREASURES.

CHARACTERS.

ANABELLA HOPEFUL, } *Young Ladies, cousins.*
ARABELLA HOPEFUL, }
ARAMINTA NORTIGAL, *Their Friend.*
SUSAN, *Maid to Arabella.*

COSTUMES.—MODERN.

PROPERTIES.

Covered table. Writing materials and two letters on it. Sofa. Easy chair. Three or four other chairs. Carpet. Two letters for SUSAN to bring in.

SLIGHTED TREASURES.

SCENE.—*A Drawing-Room. Table R.; writing materials and two letters on it. Sofa and easy chair L. Three or four other chairs scattered about stage. Door C.—door R. and L.*

ANABELLA HOPEFUL *discovered seated at table, R., folding and addressing a letter.*

Ana. So that will settle his pretensions. I am perfectly amazed at the man's presumption.

Enter SUSAN, L.

Susan. If you please, miss, are you at home?

Ana. Well, really, Susan, I have not yet decided whether I am at home or not.

Susan. Oh, what droll ways, miss, you have in London. Now in our village people are always at home except when they are out.

Ana. I shouldn't at all wonder, Susan; the fact is, my good girl, you are not yet educated.

Susan. Well, mother said I left off going to school too soon. Please, miss, have you found out yet whether you are at home or not? for all this while the young lady is waiting to know.

Ana. What young lady?

Susan. Why the young lady in the front parlor.

Ana. Dear, dear, was there ever such a girl! What is the young lady's name?

Susan. Oh, you know her very well, miss ; she very often calls in to see you.

Ana. I asked you her name.

Susan. Yes, miss, she is a particular friend of yours.

Ana. Susan, how provoking you are. Who is the young lady?

Susan. Miss Araminta Nortigal, miss.

Ana. (*Rising.*) Oh, then, of course I am at home.

Susan. That's what I say, miss—of course you are—because, you know, unless you happen to have gone out—

Ana. That will do, Susan, you may go.

Enter ARAMINTA NORTIGAL, L.

Aram. I heard your voice, my dear Anabella ; and as I know that you are always at home to me—

Ana. Certainly, my love. Susan, you may go.

(*ANABELLA and ARAMINTA converse.*)

Susan. Yes, miss. (*Aside.*) What fuss there is in London to find out whether anybody is at home ; in our village people don't come hammering at the door, enough to break it down, but they just quietly lift up the latch and walk into the house. I thought everybody in London knew so much, but I find we are a great deal more sensible down in our parts. (*Exit L.*)

Ana. Yes, you are right, last night's was indeed a very pleasant party ; I do not think I ever passed a happier evening.

Aram. You were the admired of all beholders.

Ana. Really, you will make me far too vain.

Aram. (*Aside.*) You are by far too vain already.

Ana. And besides, it was you who were the belle of the evening.

Aram. Nay, now, you really must not ; my poor old aunt is constantly telling me that I rate myself too highly, so do not, by your flattery, add to my self-esteem.

Ana. (*Aside.*) There is no occasion, that organ is already too prominently developed.

Aram. I hoped last night to have seen your cousin Arabella with you.

Ana. She has no relish, she tells me, for a crowd.

Enter ARABELLA HOPEFUL, R.

Ana. But here she is to answer for herself.

Arab. Concerning what, dear cousin?

Aram. Oh, nothing very culpable. Good morning, my love! You are found guilty of preferring quiet to a crowd, that is all.

Arab. And I have no hesitation in confessing my delinquency. A book, or a chat by the fire-side are to me infinitely preferable to the noise and jostling of a ball-room, where the men appear only to study how to outvie each other in saying silly nothings, and the women to excel in the art of dressing extravagantly.

Aram. Oh, how very severe!

Arab. And as all cannot excel, those who fail are filled with spite and envy against those who have succeeded.

Aram. (*Aside.*) The ill-natured little misanthrope.

Ana. You must not heed her, Araminta.

Arab. You should have heard Anabella herself, on her return home last night; she kept me yawning for two whole hours while she was discoursing of the style and material of I know not how many dresses, with all the etceteras that go to make up a ball-room toilet; her entire evening must have been devoted to nothing more than taking an inventory of every dress, and every ribbon that was displayed before her.

Aram. Indeed, my dear, you are wrong, (*maliciously*) she had far other, and, I presume, better employment.

Ana. Flirting, you would say; of course, I understand you, my dear. (*Aside.*) She is dying with envy, and I am glad of it. (*Aloud.*) I assure you, Arabella, that last night I paid very little attention to any young lady's dress; as my dear friend, Araminta has just observed, I was far better engaged; but one cannot help seeing, you know, and—by the bye, Araminta, did you ever behold such a dowdy in a ball-room as that poor little Rebecca Trotter?

(*ARABELLA laughs L.*)

Aram. And yet the material of her dress was well enough.

Ana. Yes, certainly; but it must have been cut out with a knife and fork, sewn together with a packing needle, and thrown upon her back with a pitch-fork.

Aram. For myself I did not see much amiss with her; but you are naturally fastidious, my dear, possessing as you do such exquisite taste in dress. (*Aside to ARABELLA.*) Must tell her so, though of course we know better.

Arab. (*Laughing.*) Oh you town ladies! you make me wish myself back again in my quiet country house.

Ana. You have brought its manners here with you, my dear, where it's as much out of place as were old Mrs. Muddle's false ringlets when they fell into the tureen full of soup; and as little relished by the company.

Arab. (*Smiling.*) Want of taste, probably, in both instances. For six months, dear Anabella, that I have been staying with you, I have struggled hard to assimilate my natural habits with your acquired tastes, but fortunately, as I now think, the effort has proved a decided failure, and so the best thing that you could do with me, would be to send me packing whence I came.

Ana. It was with a noble intention that I invited you from your dreary country home, and asked you to become my companion here, in London.

Arab. A noble intention!

Ana. Yes, my love, to procure you a husband.

Arab. I fear I am not sufficiently grateful.

Ana. Indeed you are not, or you would have cultivated a taste for society, which would have rendered it an easy task to me, to have obtained for you a wealthy alliance.

Arab. Then pray tell me, cousin, how comes it that you have not yet succeeded *for yourself*?

Aram. (*Laughing.*) Oh, my dear, really you must not! what rural simplicity!—you do say such droll things.

Ana. You are mistaken, my love—I have had many opportunities; indeed only this very morning I have received an offer of marriage.

Arab. Indeed!

Aram. (*Aside.*) I don't believe it—she fibs terribly. (*Aloud.*) Might one ask, my love, who is—

Ana. I can withhold no confidence from such dear friends as are you both; but of course you will be secret.

Aram. Oh, of course, my love. (*Aside.*) I must tell Miss Jones and Selina Smith—and how amazed they will be!

Ana. (*Haughtily.*) Well, then, my dears, the gentleman who has done me the honor to propose for my hand—

Aram. Yes, yes—his name?

Ana. Alexander Muggleton.

Arab. (*Aside.*) Oh, heaven!

Aram. He!—is it possible?

Arab. (*Aside.*) Thus then perish the hopes I had dared to cherish; thus rudely then is dispelled the only claim which held me here. Well, I will return unto my happy home. Alas! happy never more for me, since where'er I go I shall be followed by the remembrance of my misplaced love, and his cruel treachery.

Aram. Alexander Muggleton! he has proposed to you? you perfectly amaze me!

Ana. Wherefore?

Aram. I should rather have judged him smitten with your cousin, Arabella, for I have seen him linger by her side for an hour together, and all the time so rapt in what I really thought was honied converse, that he has been both deaf and blind to all around him.

Ana. Well, yes, certainly, he has seemed rather attentive to Arabella; was, of course, amused by her rusticity, nothing further, that is very clear; indeed, often when he has been by her side, a most expressive glance has informed me very fully on whom his admiration was bestowed.

Arab. (*Aside.*) Oh, what had I done to him that he should thus make of me a sport and mockery.

Ana. (*Going to table, and pointing to an open letter.*) See, here is his letter containing the all-important proposal.

Aram. (*Aside.*) It is really true then; I did not think him so perfectly devoid of taste.

Ana. Arabella, my love, how pensive you have suddenly grown; had you really entertained a hope that—well, if so, he may yet be yours, for, of course, I have rejected him.

Aram. Rejected him! (*Aside.*) How could she be so silly, and marrying men so scarce?

Arab. Why should you imagine, cousin, that I?—

Ana. Dear, dear, I had forgotten; I have not yet sent the answer which will plunge him into despair.

Arab. Withhold it then entirely, for never could you mate more worthily; it would glad me, dear cousin, to behold your fate so happily fixed. (*Aside.*) Although my own is embittered now, and forever.

Ana. How absurdly you talk; but you were bred in fields and

forests, and so, of course, know no better. (*Directing the letter—calling.*) Susan!

Arab. I must confess, Anabella, that had he proposed to me, I should, I think, hesitate before I—

Ana. And you would do rightly, for to you, no doubt, the offer would be very tempting.

Aram. (*Aside.*) Now that as closely resembles an impertinence as anything I ever heard.

Enter SUSAN, L.

Ana. (*Giving the letter to SUSAN.*) Bid John convey this letter immediately to its address.

Susan. Yes, miss.

Ana. (*To ARAMINTA.*) As he resides but in the next street, it will not be long before the poor fellow is put out of, or into, his misery.

(*SUSAN is L.C.—ARABELLA L. corner.*)

Susan. Oh, Miss Arabella, how melancholy you do look; you are like me, and London don't agree with you. Ah, miss, I wish we were once more back again at the old house—we shouldn't have to consider long whether we were at home or not. (*Exit L.*)

Aram. (*R.*) Anabella, my dear; may I ask your reasons for having rejected Mr. Muggleton?

Arab. (*L.*) There is, no doubt, one which is all-sufficient.

Ana. (*C.*) Which is—

Arab. That you love him not.

Ana. (*To ARAMINTA.*) Did you ever hear any one talk so ridiculously? Love, indeed! That I should ever condescend to love any male creature breathing, is entirely out of the question! I have, I hope, to great a sense of my own proper dignity.

Arab. How—would you not love your husband?

Ana. I hope not; for that would be to render myself a slave to every caprice of him whom I had chosen; therefore I would keep my heart free and unfettered, that I might compel him always to bow to my whims and wishes.

Arab. I have no faith in your reasoning—it is not of the heart. For myself, I would not wed a prince unless I loved him.

Ana. Then I pity you; for only once tell a man you love him, and he grows so horribly conceited there is no longer doing anything with him.

Arab. If you cannot love, why should you marry?

Ana. (*Laughing.*) Oh, really, Arabella, you are too ridiculous.

Aram. We marry, my love; for wealth and position in society.

Arab. And these are possessed by the man whom but now she has rejected.

Aram. Very true—and I cannot understand her motive for—

Ana. My dear, he is so remarkably plain—in fact, perfectly ordinary, nay, in my opinion, decidedly ugly.

Arab. He is very good; at least, I thought so till—

(Checking herself.)

Ana. Good! oh, yes, no doubt about it—so are there many good books, but we like them the better—at all events, I do, if they are handsomely bound.

Arab. He has, as I have ascertained, a benevolent heart, and gives bountifully of his wealth to the poor and needy.

Ana. Which would recommend him highly to me, if I were poor and needy.

Arab. That he is not eminently handsome, I should deem an advantage.

Ana. Indeed!

Arab. Yes, for not being able to employ himself with his own beauty, he would have full leisure to admire that of his wife.

Ana. Probably; but as, no doubt, I should be compelled occasionally to go into society with my husband, I should not like to be seen with a scarecrow.

Arab. (*Excitedly.*) Anabella, you are mad! he is no—

Ana. Heyday!

Aram. To my thinking he is by no means bad looking—I never beheld more beautiful eyes.

Arab. Are they not? and his face so full of intellect, grows positively handsome when he smiles; for his smile is so winning, and illuminates, as it were, his every feature.

Ana. You are in love with him, my dear! I thought so, long since, and am very sorry for you.

Aram. And his figure is most elegant and commanding; but, my dear, (*to ANABELLA*) I will speak no more of his qualifications, for if it be really true that you love him, every praise bestowed will be to you an added regret that he is blind to your devotion.

Arab. (*Ironically.*) I am indebted to you for your considerations.

Aram. There is no validity, Anabella, in the reasons you have assigned.

Ana. All those set aside, I have another, and an insurmountable objection.

Aram. And that is?—

Ana. His name is Muggleton

Aram. Well, and what then?

Ana. What then? Good Heavens! do you suppose that I could live for one single hour after having heard myself called “Mrs. Muggleton;” and then at the doors of the opera how it would sound—“Mrs. Muggleton’s carriage stops the way.” Oh, there is suicide in the very idea!

Aram. There is absurdity only! a name can neither add to, nor take from your worth, and if you deserved it, as much homage would be paid you under the name of Muggleton, as if you bore a sounding and euphonious appellation.

Ana. Homage! ridiculous! no one could claim even common respect, who suffered under the name of Muggleton!

Arab. You are jesting, or you are crazy!

Aram. I say with Shakespeare—“What’s in a name?”

Ana. And I answer, a great deal—when one has to bear it for a whole life time.

Enter SUSAN, L.

Susan. John has come back, miss.

Ana. He delivered my letter?

Susan. Yes, miss, to the gentleman himself, and John says that Mr. Smugglebone—

Aram. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! how exceedingly good, ha, ha, ha!

Ana. Muggleton, silly girl.

Susan. Puggleton—ah, yes—but I can’t pronounce it, it is such a droll name.

Ana. You hear, you hear! what would be my fate? Mrs. Muggleton would be tortured into Mrs. Smugglebone—why, I should expire at your feet.

Susan. And John says he stood by while Mr. —— the gentleman opened and read the letter.

Ana. Ah, and what did he say!

Susan. Well, miss, I don't think he said anything, for John says he never spoke a word.

Ana. How stupid!

Susan. Yes, miss, John says he did look stupid over it, and started, and rubbed his eyes, as if he couldn't believe they were properly doing their duty.

Aram. Perfectly astounded that you should reject him—that is evident!

Susan. And then, when he had read all the letter, John says he burst out into a tremendous fit of laughter.

Ana. Laughter? he laughed?

Aram. Hysterics, my dear, hysterics—no doubt about it—and no wonder.

Susan. John says he never heard a man laugh so in all his life, and ran off frightened, because he thought Mr. — the gentleman! was an insane maniac.

Aram. You see I was right when I said hysterics—'tis quite clear, the shock has deprived him of his reason.

Ana. Poor fellow, I am rather sorry for him. That will do, Susan!

Susan. (*Aside.*) Well, they are queer people in London. I have often seen a letter come down to our parts, but I never saw anybody go crazy about it. (*Exit L.*)

Arab. I'll not believe that his strong mind could be so easily overthrown—the servant has exaggerated.

Ana. I hope it may be so; but, if men will aspire too highly—

Arab. He could not!

Aram. (*Aside.*) Her conceit is quite insufferable.

Ana. Supposing the worst, it is a comfort to know that lunatics are kindly treated now-a-days.

Arab. Oh, cousin!

Aram. They are certain to shave his head.

Ana. Yes, and most probably he will need a straight-waistcoat—but nothing more.

Arab. How can you?

(*Goes up and sits.*)

Ana. And now we will dismiss the subject from our minds.

Aram. Yes, it is too melancholy to hold a place there.

Ana. You know Adolphus Fitz Montgomery?

Aram. Who does not know him—the most handsome man in London.

Ana. There cannot be another man in all the world, so handsome, so superbly beautiful! his lengthened whiskers, and his flowing beard, oh!

Aram. It is worth a king's ransom to be permitted to gaze upon them.

Ana. She will be, indeed, an envied being who shall become his wife!

Aram. (*Conceitedly.*) That has always been my notion.

Ana. Araminta, my sincere and valued friend; I can have no secret from you.

Aram. And could I withhold my confidence from so frank and generous a being as yourself?

Ana. Know then, cherished of my soul, that on Adolphus Fitz Montgomery I have set my heart—I mean, of course, my mind—but 'tis all the same.

Aram. You? (*Aside.*) What presumption!

Ana. He, or nobody, shall be my husband!

Aram. My dear love, if you hold to that resolution, you will certainly die a spinster.

Ana. My sweetest friend, what can you possibly mean?

Aram. That I have every reason to believe that Adolphus Fitz Montgomery is in love—

Ana. Yes, with me!

Aram. No, I am the object of—

Ana. Well, you certainly are an object

Aram. Anabella!

Ana. Well?

Aram. No matter! He has uttered to me the sweetest phrases!

Ana. And he has whispered to me the softest words.

Aram. Yes, that they might harmonise with the mind he was addressing!

Ana. Araminta!

Aram. You raise my pity—you are so ridiculously vain.

Ana. You excite my compassion—you are so horribly conceited.

Arab. (*Advancing c.*) How is this, quarrelling? two such dear friends!

Ana. } Friends!
Aram. }

Ana. I loathe her!

Aram. I detest her!

Ana. Adolphus Fitz Montgomery shall be mine!

Aram. No, mine!

Ana. } Mine! mine!
Aram. }

Enter SUSAN, L.

Susan. Please, Miss Anabella, here's a letter. (*Giving letter to ANABELLA.*) I asked the postman who it came from, and he said he didn't know—I declare they know nothing in London! (*Exit L.*)

Ana. (*Having opened letter, and looked at signature.*) I declare it is from that dear little creature, Emma Tomlinson—read it to me, cousin! (*Giving letter to ARABELLA.*) It will soothe my agitation, for—(*looking reproachfully at ARAMINTA*)—she is a true friend, and would not strive to cross my dearest hopes.

Aram. I admire Emma Tomlinson, she has an affectionate heart, and would never endeavor to thwart my most earnest wishes.

Arab. (*Reading letter.*) “Best and choicest friend of this poor broken heart—”

Ana. Oh, dear! some horrible calamity has occurred to her.

Aram. Poor suffering angel!

Arab. “Long, long has my entire devotion been given to—”

Ana. Dear me! to whom?

Aram. Blessed little darling!

Arab. “To Adolphus Fitz Montgomery!”

Ana. What? The forward minx!

Aram. Presumptuous little creature!

Arab. “I believed him far above common humanity; but, alas—”

Ana. She is spiteful because he despises her.

Aram. That is very evident!

Arab. “But, alas, he is very common humanity indeed; he is all false, including the magnificent beard and whiskers—”

Aram. Good heavens!

Ana. Horror!

Arab. "He is proved to be a noted member of the swell mob! (*ANABELLA and ARAMINTA scream*) and is now in custody for having stolen a gold watch from a house at which he was on a visit."

(*Both scream again, and fall each into a chair.*)

Arab. (*Laughing.*) I trust this lesson may do you good!

Ana. (*Starting up.*) Yes, Araminta, I hope you will profit by it! Behold on what a wretch you had placed your affections.

Aram. Oh, my dear, what a narrow escape you have had!

Ana. I, indeed! I cared nothing for the fellow. I was merely jesting—just to tease you, ha, ha, ha!

Aram. And so of course, *was I!* for the same laudable purpose—ha, ha, ha!

Ana. How false and hollow is all the world—of course, my dear, I mean the male world. (*Suddenly, and joyfully.*) Ah, I see sunshine—Mr. Muggleton! I will accept his proposal!

Arab. But you have already rejected it!

Ana. Oh, that is of very little consequence, for everybody is well aware that a woman's "no," generally means "yes."

Aram. But, you forget, he has lost his reason.

Ana. No matter, I will drag him forth from the lunatic asylum; if he can but be made to understand that I consent, the joyful tidings will at once restore him.

Aram. But his horrid name, you know.

Ana. Arabella's sensible remarks have changed my opinion respecting it.

Enter SUSAN, L.

Susan. If you please, Miss Anabella, here is another letter; a man has just brought it, and he says it comes from Mr.—the gentleman!

Ana. From him—give it to me. (*Takes and opens letter.*) Written, of course, amidst his ravings. I fear I shall find it a dreadfully incoherent epistle.

Arab. Cousin, how can you talk so absurdly?

Ana. (*Reading letter.*) "Madam, I neved presumed to aspire to the honor of your hand." Poor fellow! You hear, quite demented! "It is my bad writing that has occasioned the unhappy error." What? "You have read your own for your cousin's name—" Oh! "for to Miss Arabella Hopeful was my letter addressed."

Arab. To me? Ah, what happiness!

Ana. (*Thrusting letter into her hand.*) Here! take it! I don't want to read the rubbish.

Arab. (*Reading.*) "Who cannot but know that with my whole heart I am devoted to her." (*Kisses letter.*) Dear Alexander! Ah, how my thoughts have wronged him!

Aram. (*With exuberant sympathy.*) My dear Anabella, what an unhappy day! What tortures you are made to suffer!

Ana. I have no occasion for your sympathy—I thank you—but look at this! (*Taking an envelope from table.*) is not that an n—A-n—A-n—

Aram. No, certainly! A-r, A-r—nothing could be plainer!

Ana. (*Snatching envelope from her hand.*) Indeed! nothing could be plainer? You are mistaken—you are plainer—*plainer* than any female I ever beheld!

Aram. Study your looking-glass, *my love*, without vanity, and you will see reason to change your opinion.

Arab. Nay, nay, why should you quarrel?

Ana. You cannot understand it, *of course*; all is *couleur de rose* with you—the future Mrs. Muggleton. Muggleton—pah! what an odious name!

Susan. La, Miss Arabella, are you going to be Mrs. — Mrs. — the gentleman?

Arab. Are you sorry, Susan?

Susan. La, no, miss, glad—every young woman ought to be married—it's what we are born to, when there are no disappointments.

Ana. Silence!

Susan. Yes, miss. Please, Miss Arabella, I am going to be married, too, I am.

Arab. Indeed!

Susan. Yes, miss; I have just had a proposal from John Thomas.

Arab. I congratulate you, Susan; and I am sure, to oblige me, Mr. Muggleton will take you both into his service.

Susan. Thank you, miss. And how strange, isn't it, that we should come up to London and almost directly get a husband a-piece, while these two young ladies who were born and bred in the place—

Ana. Susan, how dare you?

Aram. Never heard such impertinence in all my life?

Arab. Forgive her rustic candor; she had no thought that she was

treading upon dangerous ground ; and after all, dear cousin, there was sound philosophy in her remark.

Ana. I am afraid there was ; at any rate, I begin to be convinced that dressing and flirting are not the surest roads to an establishment. It may be, *Araminta*, that if we recede, lovers will advance, so let us retire into obscurity with the hope that earnest searchers may discover our value, and that we may soon cease to be **SLIGHTED TREASURES**.

Disposition of the Characters.

ARAMINTA.
2

ANABELLA.

G

ANABELLA.

SUEAN.
1

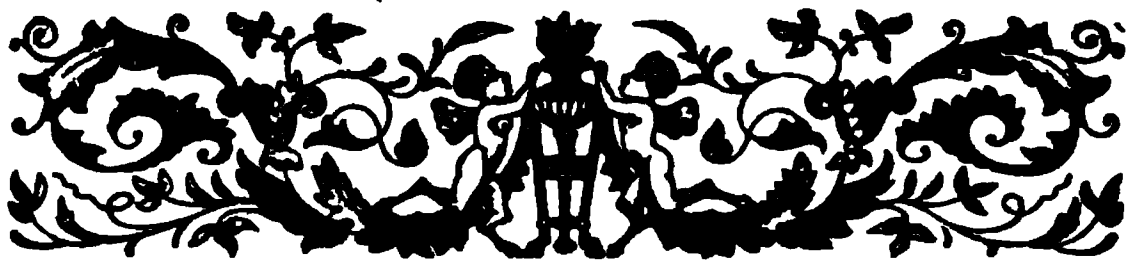
LUTHERAN.

To Meet Mr. Thompson

A Farce in One Act

By
CLARA J. DENTON





TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

A Farce in One Act.

CHARACTERS.

BELLA	<i>The young lady hostess</i>
LOU	}	<i>Young ladies, residents of the same town and acquainted with each other. They are also Bella's guests.</i>
ELLA		
MARY		
EMILY		
GRACE		
JULIA		
FANNIE		

COSTUMES.

Any tasteful dresses that may be suitably worn at a small evening party. Hats and wraps are worn on entering. The latter should of course correspond with the season, and are to be laid aside at the proper time.



TO MEET MR. THOMPSON.

SCENE. — *A parlor. Eight chairs must be placed carelessly about so that the occupants will be within easy speaking distance of one another and yet not too far from C. Curtain rises. BELLA enters L, and sits.*

BELLA. To think that at last, at long, long last, this village really possesses a full-grown, live, rational, young man! I can hardly realize it. To be sure, we have had Tom Jones, and Harry Spar, and John Smith, the first and second not yet out of their teens, the last a forlorn widower of forty. But now, O joy! here is an eligible young man of not more than twenty-three or four. Tall, handsome, dark-eyed, a lawyer, and with — Oh, *such* a moustache! Dear me! I can hardly wait until I see him entering the room. (*A door-bell rings behind the scenes. BELLA starts up.*) Oh, I do hope that is he! What a charming *tête-à-tête* we may have before the other girls get here! (*Enter LOU, R. BELLA rushes to meet her. They embrace.*)

BELLA (*motioning L.*). Just step in here, Lou, and remove your wraps, and arrange your hair. (*Exit Lou, L.*) I might have known that Lou would be the

first one on hand. Of course that is her privilege, as she is my most intimate friend. (*Re-enter Lou, L. They both sit near C. as LOU speaks.*)

LOU. So, I am the first arrival. I did not expect to be. I thought the girls would all arrive early. O Bella! if you only knew the stir those invitations "to meet Mr. Thompson" have created in this stupid little burgh.

BELLA. Nonsense, Lou! why should it?

LOU. Why should it? Oh, now, Bella, don't pretend not to know that Mr. Thompson is the most delightful, most irresistible, most rare creature ever seen in this huddle called by courtesy a "town."

BELLA. So you have seen him? (*The bell rings. They both spring up, rush to centre, and exclaim together, excitedly, "There he is!" Enter ELLA, R. They rush forward, embrace her, and she is directed by BELLA into the adjoining room, as was LOU. Exit ELLA, L. BELLA and LOU resume seats.*)

LOU. Of course *Ella* would be here on time. I don't suppose cables and chains could have kept her at home to-night.

BELLA. Well, all of my invitations have been accepted. I don't suppose any of the girls would miss coming.

LOU. Unless it may be those whom you forgot to invite.

(*ELLA enters in time to hear the last word.*)

ELLA (*sits near the others*). And how many have you invited, Bella?

BELLA. Only nine.

ELLA }
and } Nine!
LOU. }

LOU. Poor Mr. Thompson!

ELLA. He will not live to tell the tale.

BELLA. I begin to think he foresees the danger, and that his instincts of self-preservation are too strong to admit of his coming.

(The bell rings again. They all start to their feet, and exclaim, "There he is!" as before. Enter MARY. Repeat as on ELLA'S entrance. BELLA directs as before. Exit MARY, L. The others resume seats.)

ELLA. Of course *Mary* would come, trust her for that. Indeed, Bella, it is very generous of you to give all of us girls the pleasure of Mr. Thompson's acquaintance. *(Enter MARY.)* Almost any other girl would have kept his society for herself.

MARY *(approaches the others, and sits)*. But, we must have met him sometime, and, of course, she prefers to have the performance take place under her supervision, as it were.

LOU. Then, I think she will be disappointed, for I don't believe he's coming.

(The bell rings. All start up as before, repeat exclamation, etc. Enter EMILY, R. Repeat all "business" as on entrance of others. Exit EMILY, L. Others resume their places.)

MARY. Oh, I knew *she* would be here! It's so long since she's seen a young man, she *(enter EMILY, L.)* forgets how one looks.

EMILY *(coming forward)*. What is that? Who forgets how what looks? *(Sits near others.)*

BELLA. We all have forgotten how a full-grown, live young man looks.

EMILY. Well, where is your curiosity? Why don't you bring him out?

LOU. We await his royal pleasure.

(Bell as before. Repeat former business fully. Enter GRACE, R. Repeat as for others. Exit GRACE, L. The others resume their seats.)

EMILY. Oh, I knew *Grace* would come. She has been on what the boys call a "still hunt" for a *(enter GRACE, L.)* young man for nobody knows how long.

GRACE *(as she comes to the others, and sits)*. Who has been a young man for nobody knows how long? Surely, not Mr. Thompson?

BELLA. Oh, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

LOU. Oh, dear, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

ELLA. No indeed! not *Mr. Thompson*.

MARY. Oh, my, no! not *Mr. Thompson*.

EMILY. Why, certainly not *Mr. Thompson*. *(These answers must be very emphatic.)*

BELLA. I conclude you have not seen him, Grace?

GRACE. Seen him? Indeed, I haven't. I have *heard* of nothing else for the last two weeks but Mr. Thompson. Is he handsome?

ALL IN CONCERT. Handsome! handsome! Oh, oh, oh!—oh, oh, oh!

GRACE. Dear me, what a wonder he must be! But why doesn't he come? *(Bell, as before. Repeat former "business." Enter JULIA, R., as before. Exit JULIA, L. The others resume seats.)*

EMILY. Bella, you certainly were not on the look-out for beauty, when you invited Julia.

ELLA. Was she when she invited the rest of us?

MARY. Oh, come now, Ella! leave that (*enter JULIA, L.*) for Mr. Thompson to decide.

JULIA (*taking seat*). What must Mr. Thompson decide?

GRACE. Which one of this flock his highness shall escort to her home.

ELLA. He lives the nearest to my house. Doesn't that give me the first claim?

LOU. And my home is directly on the way thither, so that gives me his other arm.

MARY. Pshaw, girls! can't you see that he is in gallantry bound to escort the one who lives at the greatest distance from here? And *her* name is Mary.

EMILY. And my home is only two blocks from your house.

JULIA. But how can he go home with any of us, unless he first gets here?

(*Bell rings. Repeat former movements, etc. Enter FANNIE, R, as before. Exit FANNIE, L. All sit again.*)

GRACE. Now, girls, Fannie lives farther away than any of us.

JULIA. And if he goes home with her, he passes my door, so, I think (*enter FANNIE, L.*), Fannie and I will have him.

FANNIE (*joins others, and sits*). Have whom? Not Mr. Thompson?

ALL (*in concert and laughing*). Oh, yes, Mr. Thompson! Oh, yes, we'll all have Mr. Thompson!

FANNIE (*indignantly*). Why, girls, I am surprised at you all. But please don't include my name. The idea of angling for a young man in that way!

BELLA. O Fannie! don't scold us! the girls were only trying to decide whom he should escort home, and they settled on you and Julia.

FANNIE (*looking around*). But where is the young man?

ALL. Oh, he isn't here yet!

FANNIE. So, while you are waiting, you are settling the question of his attentions. You might cast lots on the matter. (*Sarcastically.*)

EMILY. I'll tell you a good plan, girls.

ALL. What is it? What is it?

EMILY. Let him choose for himself.

ALL. Oh! oh!

BELLA. Well, now, girls, since you have settled the question, I will tell you he probably will escort none of you home to-night, for I have invited his two sisters to accompany him. I knew you would be dying to meet them.

(*Bell rings. All exclaim, as before. A voice at right entrance calls loudly, "Miss Bella, here is a note for you!"*)

BELLA. You hear that, girls; pray excuse me a moment. (*Exit BELLA, R.*)

(*The others now huddle together at C., muttering to each other, "Mean thing!" "She did it on purpose!" "Much we care for his old sisters!" "She didn't want*

*him to go home with any of us !” “ We’ll pay her up !”
“ I’ll invite him to my house !” “ And so will I !” The
last exclamation in chorus. Enter BELLA, R., carrying
an open letter. They all drop quickly into their chairs,
and are silent.)*

BELLA (*coming to c.*). Young ladies, I have just received this note, which I will read. (*Reads.*)

“MISS BELLA,— We are forced, at the last minute, by circumstances beyond our control, to decline your very courteous invitation. I will call on you to-morrow, and explain more fully.

Yours with many regrets,

HARRY THOMPSON.”

(*All rise, and come to c.*)

LOU. So this is the way we “meet Mr. Thompson !”

ELLA. How charmed I have been to “meet Mr. Thompson !”

MARY. What a rare treat “to meet Mr. Thompson !”

EMILY. Oh, lovely Mr. Thompson !

GRACE. Delightful Mr. Thompson !

JULIA. Oh, rare Mr. Thompson !

FANNIE. Very rare, indeed !

ALL (*except BELLA*). The next time I go out “to meet Mr. Thompson ” —

BELLA (*smiling and courtesying*). Let us hope you will “meet Mr. Thompson.”

CURTAIN.

(*Real names may be substituted, if preferred, throughout.*)

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